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MR. MACREADY AS RICHARD II.

King Richard II., Act V., Scene V.

PLAYERS AND PLAYWRIGHTS I HAVE KNOWN

A REVIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE FROM 1840 TO 1880

By JOHN COLEMAN
ACTOR AND MANAGER

WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS FROM AUTHENTIC PORTRAITS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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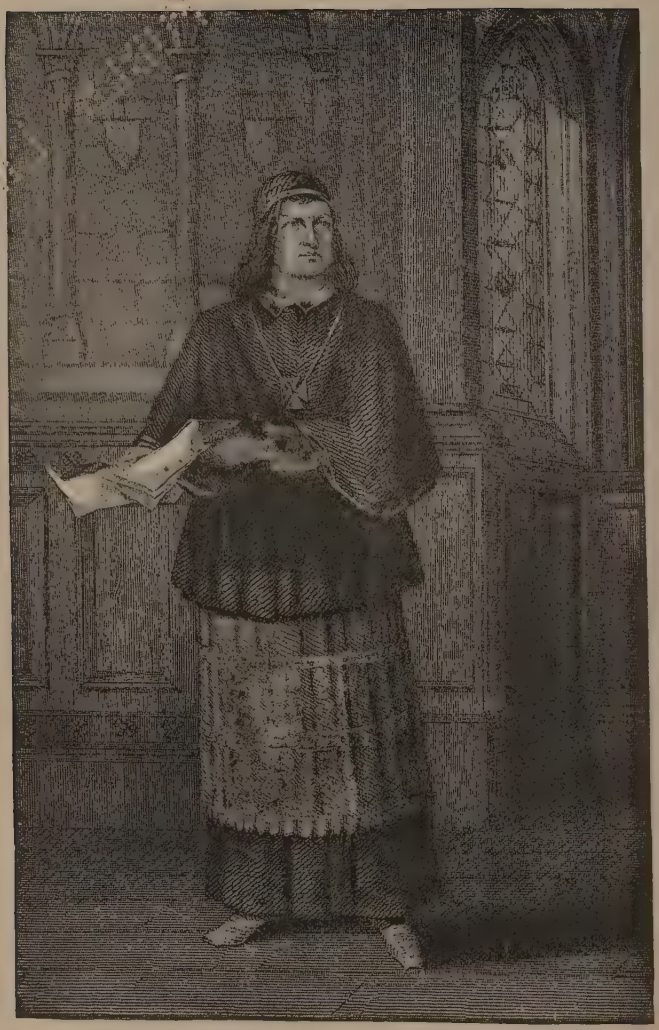

MR. MACREADY AS CARDINAL WOLSEY.

PLAYERS AND PLAYWRIGHTS I HAVE KNOWN.

FIRST PERSON SINGULAR.

It was my intention to have sent forth the following pages with the briefest possible induction, merely stating that some of the chapters had already appeared in *Temple Bar*, *Longman's*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *National Review*, the *Dramatic Review*, *Time*, and other periodicals; but my publishers having made it a *sine quâ non* that I shall provide something in the shape of an autobiographical introduction, so as to place myself *en rapport* with the reader, I yield to their wishes.

Soon after the interview with Mr. Macready, described in the reminiscences of that eminent actor, was sent on trial to an architect and surveyor, again ran away, came on the stage, went to Leicester, where I first met Tom Robertson—to Belfast, where encountered the Keans—to Scotland, where I struggled and starved through all the vicissitudes of stroller's life, till I found myself a subordinate

member of a very powerful company, organized by Anderson ("The Wizard of the North") for his new and beautiful theatre on Glasgow Green, destroyed by fire during the very first year of its existence.

From Anderson I went to the famous showman David Prince Miller, at the Adelphi Theatre. Here my ill-luck left me, for, fortunately, Mr. Murray saw me act John Macdonald in Sergeant Talfourd's sombre tragedy "Glencoe," and engaged me at once for the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh.

To be a member of that famous company was in itself a diploma of artistic ability.

Edmund Glover, son of the great Mrs. Glover, afterwards for many years manager of the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, was the leading man. He was one of the best fellows in the world, modest, manly, and unpretentious; he was an admirable painter, and one of the best all-round actors that ever lived.

Bob Wyndham and his accomplished wife, afterwards managers of the Edinburgh Theatre—both now enjoying the *otium cum dig.* upon a well-earned fortune—were also members of the company.

Wyndham was the juvenile tragedian (*vice* Leigh Murray resigned for promotion in town), and Mrs. Wyndham was equally good in anything, from Lady Macbeth to Rosalind.

George Maynard, from the Adelphi, was the "heavy" man; William Howard, a capital actor, was the eccentric comedian; Sam Cowell, the well-known droll of Evans's, and the facetious Lloyd, were the

low comedians, while old Ray, afterwards of Sadler's Wells, was the old man. This eccentric personage died the other day intestate, leaving behind him a nice little fortune which has reverted to the Crown.

Mackay, the famous Bailie Nicol Jarvie, was a kind of "stock star," appearing at frequent intervals in his original parts, the Bailie, Dominie Sampson (to Miss Cushman's Meg Merrilies), Caleb Balderstone, Meg Dodds, etc.

It was at the banquet given at the Modern Athens in honour of this admirable actor that Sir Walter Scott first avowed himself the author of Waverley. A jolly old chap was the Bailie. We lived in the same neighbourhood in the old town, and I used to walk home with him nightly, a rapt listener to his racy reminiscences of auld lang syne.

The regular leading ladies of the company were: Mrs. Leigh Murray, then, as now, a delightful and amiable woman, and an accomplished actress; Miss Cleaver, a mature and majestic spinster; Miss Nicol, another spinster, if possible, rather more precise, but a very charming old lady and a sterling comedian; the soubrette was the sprightly Mrs. Tellet (Clara Chaplin), at that period one of the most piquant, pretty, and "fetching" creatures I have ever beheld; Miss Macfarlane, a bright-haired, bright-eyed, modest girl, who afterwards became Mrs. Eburne, and Miss Julia St. George, then a most charming vocalist in the flower of youthful beauty.

Mr. Mackenzie (an admirable musician and a gentleman), father of the present President of the

Royal Academy of Music, was the leader of the band. The minor members of the company were: Mr. Reynolds, for many years leading man with Mrs. Lane at the Britannia; Jack Parselle, so long at the Lyceum and the Strand; Melrose, the great Dougal and Dandie Dinmont; Josephs, father of Miss Fanny Josephs; Messrs. Eburne, Bernard, Stirling, Dalton, George Honey, and myself. Besides these, there was the inimitable Murray, beyond all question one of the most versatile and accomplished comedians that ever put foot upon the stage.

I look round in vain at the present metropolitan theatres to find any company which can possibly compare with this troupe of country players.

Despite this remarkable combination, we not infrequently played to "a beggarly account of empty benches."

In comparing notes with Charles Reade on this subject, he positively used to glow with a fervour of admiration of the Edinburgh actors. Although a rabid partizan of Farren's, Reade always maintained that the "cock salmon" of the Haymarket did not come within measurable distance of the Edinburgh manager, in Old Goldthumb, in Jerrold's comedy, "Time Works Wonders," and many other parts of a similar character. He (Reade) has often told me that, when loafing about Newhaven in his "Christie Johnstone" days, when not engaged in the herring fishing, he used to stroll up nightly to the North Bridge. He was wont to deposit himself at full length on one of the pit seats; indeed, he had

got so accustomed to have a row of seats entirely to himself up to half-price, that he positively grew to regard it as his peculiar privilege, and almost resented anything in the shape of intrusion on his domain.

Then, our "stars!" It was an age of giants! There were Macready, Charles and Mrs. Kean, Edwin Forrest, Fanny Kemble, Helen Faucit, the Vandenhoffs (father and daughter), the Cushmans (Charlotte and her sister), the Mathews (Charles and Madame Vestris), Buckstone and Fitzwilliam, Webster and Celeste, Braham, Sims Reeves, Rachel, Taglioni, etc.

It was an artistic education merely to see these illustrious people in their great parts, but to be brought daily and hourly in contact with them was a pleasure kings might envy. I was exceptionally fortunate in this respect, inasmuch as my acquaintance with these distinguished artists, in many cases, ripened in after-years to friendly intimacy.

Nor was this all. Many of these "choice and master spirits" deigned to advise and instruct me in the rudiments of my art.

I was a docile pupil, and the result was that in an inconceivably short space of time I was light comedian in Manchester and Liverpool, and at nineteen years of age I became principal tragedian in Bath and Bristol, where I had the honour to act all the opposite parts to Mr. Macready during the farewell engagement of that distinguished actor.

From there I went to the Worcester Circuit, the

Norwich Circuit, the Great Northern Circuit; thence to Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Soon after this I was engaged at Sheffield as a full-fledged "star" to oppose Charles Dillon in the great Shakespearean parts. Thence I went to the Theatre Royal, Manchester, where I acted Romeo, Orlando, Charles Surface, and Claude Melnotte to Miss Helen Faucit, and at one-and-twenty I became lessee of the Theatre Royal, Sheffield.

Then commenced a period of arduous struggle and incessant labour, combined with ever-recurring vicissitudes of fortune, the briefest epitome of which would engross the entire space allotted to this work.

Suffice it that I was successful beyond my anticipations, for even in my *première jeunesse*, and without the metropolitan hall-mark, I was accepted as a "star" in every important theatre in the United Kingdom.

The reader will doubtless wonder, this being the case, why I remained so long in the country. The answer is simple: it was because I had so little inducement to come to town.

I was ambitious, and did not care to play second fiddle to anyone, and, indeed, had I consented to do so, the remuneration was so small that I could not have lived upon it.

Mr. Kean and Mr. Phelps each offered me five pounds a week to play the juvenile tragedy. Mr. E. T. Smith at Drury Lane, Mr. Farren at the Olympic, and Mr. Augustus Harris, the elder (then

at the Princess's), offered the same terms. Fechter, more liberally disposed, offered me ten pounds a week to divide the business with him; but I knew that his "division" meant the oyster for him and the shells for me, and, to be frank, I preferred the oyster for myself.

Hence my ambition and my interests alike combined to draw me into country management on an extensive scale.

At one and the same period I was manager of the Great Northern Circuit, Leeds, where I built a new and beautiful theatre (subsequently destroyed by fire), Hull, York, Doncaster, Lincoln, Liverpool, Glasgow, and the Isle of Man, besides having three different companies on the road (precursors of the present travelling companies), one with "It's Never too Late to Mend," written by Charles Reade, another with "Clancarty," by Tom Taylor, and a third with my own starring engagements.

At length an eligible opening, or at least what I considered one, unfortunately occurred in town, and I took the Queen's Theatre in Long Acre, a building not inaptly designated by my vivacious friend, Mr. John Hollingshead, as "the catacomb of the British drama," commencing my campaign with Signor Salvini, then supposed to be a popular attraction.

All, however, is not gold that glitters.

I prepared for the exploitation of this actor "Othello," "Hamlet," and "Macbeth" on a scale of great completeness.

We opened in the height of the fashionable season, with expenses amounting to three hundred pounds a night. The receipts of the first night amounted to ninety pounds, which in the course of a few nights dribbled down to eighteen pounds, upon which the renowned Signor departed without beat of drum at a moment's notice to his beloved Italy, leaving me with an empty theatre for three months, and landing me with a loss of five thousand pounds before I commenced the winter season, when I made my first appearance in London as Henry V., assisted by one of the best companies then in existence, including Mr. Phelps and many other eminent artists.

Perhaps no actor ever made a more triumphal entry into London than he who impersonated the hero of Agincourt on that occasion, and certainly no actor ever experienced a more bitter reverse of fortune.

Thus far, in the fewest possible words, of the main incidents in a career which brought the writer into continual contact with the most distinguished members of his craft.

The reminiscences which follow owe their origin to the following concatenation of circumstances:

During our prolonged intimacy, Charles Reade was wont to continually rally me about my indolence in not committing certain romantic episodes in my life to paper.

The great demand made upon my time by my duties as manager, stage manager, actor, and occasional dramatist, combined with the claims of society,

left me little leisure and less inclination to follow this advice.

At length came a prolonged vacation.

> "Satan finds some mischief still
> For idle hands to do."

The immature poet always goes for an epic, the embryo dramatist for a tragedy in blank verse. Naturally I commenced my scribbling campaign with a novel in the orthodox and idiotic three volumes.

Upon submitting it to Messrs. Bentley, both father and son assured me that it had great merit, etc., but —there always is a "but."

They have, however, a saying in Scotland that "every 'but' has a 'ben,'" and my "ben" occurred after this fashion.

I had several interviews with the Bentleys, *père et fils*, and long talks, with the result that the elder gentleman suggested that my own reminiscences would prove interesting reading. A few days afterwards the younger Mr. Bentley wrote me as follows:

"If you could only write as you describe the various incidents, your reminiscences would be charming.

"Could you not plunge in without any formal beginning or end;* but recounting quite naturally your own personal reminiscences of Kean, etc.?

* The autocrats of Piccadilly evidently differ from the autocrats of New Burlington Street; but who shall decide when doctors differ?

You ought to be able to dash off a series of papers full of curious contretemps, amusing break-downs, stray anecdotes, your recollection of the Macready incident at Edinburgh, and so on—in fact, from the large and varied experiences you have to draw upon, the difficulty should be to avoid an *embarras de richesses.*"

Now it so happened that a very short time after this Charles Reade died.

As I walked homeward after the funeral with his nephew Arthur, Mr. Bentley's suggestion recurred to my mind. Then came the recollection of Reade's own advice, above all came the remembrance that I knew more of the inner life of my dead friend than anyone else.

That afternoon I wrote the two first chapters of the Reade reminiscences, and forwarded them to New Burlington Street. By return of post came the following letter from the elder Mr. Bentley:

"Your genial reminiscences of Charles Reade reach me here" (Tenby). "By all means send me the finish, and I will have them put in type at once for *Temple Bar.*"

At a moment when the future copyright arrangement between America and the Fatherland is such a burning question, I may perhaps be permitted to mention that the eminent Philadelphia firm of Lippincott paid me handsomely for the advance sheets of the Reade papers, and that consequently they appeared simultaneously in both hemispheres.

Having thus made the first plunge, it was easy to follow Messrs. Bentley's advice; hence the following papers, many of which may perchance supply current links in dramatic history known only to the writer; others which I hope will prove of general interest, and all of which may form material, however slight, for the future historian of the English stage in the nineteenth century.

BOOK I.

THE VICTORS.

CHAPTER I.

MACREADY.

ALTHOUGH this great actor was approaching the termination of his career when I commenced mine, I venture to think the circumstances under which we became acquainted are not without interest.

While yet a boy of fourteen, I was bitten with the theatrical mania, and having read of Macready's efforts to raise the fallen glories of the great national theatres, and also of the phenomenal triumphs of Master Betty at a previous period of dramatic decadence, I had arrived at the modest conclusion that I might emulate them.

I had displayed some precocious ability at school and elsewhere, and indiscreet adulation only added fuel to the fire; hence it was that I had the audacity to write to Mr. Macready in my father's name, requesting a hearing.

I received a very courteous autograph reply, pointing out that "any, the least degree of eminence in the histrionic art could only be achieved by years of continual application." But that, notwithstanding,

in the event of my coming to London, Mr. Macready would be happy to see me.

On receipt of this communication, I ran away from home, and made tracks for town. My resources were limited, and I had to travel third-class. The carriages then were open tubs exposed to rain, hail, snow, sleet, and the four winds of heaven; and by the time we got to Rugby I felt as if the very marrow in my bones was frozen.

I had just lost my mother, and some kind motherly women, who were fellow-travellers, took compassion on me. One of them spread out a rug upon the bottom of the carriage for me to lie upon, the others (for they were nearly all women in my compartment) spread out their petticoats over me, and sheltered me from the snow and the wind until my frozen limbs were thawed; and growing quite warm and comfortable, I fell fast asleep and never woke till we got to London.

At Euston Square an old schoolfellow met me and took me home with him.

Mr. Macready's letter was dated "Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park," and thither I went the next morning at ten o'clock, only to find that he had already gone to Drury Lane for rehearsal. So to the theatre I followed him.

Sending up my card (my father's), I was conducted to a room which was filled with books, MSS., and play-bills.

Here I waited for half an hour or more, until Mr. Serle, Macready's manager, came and interviewed

WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY.

me. He was very complaisant, and presently led me towards the Grand Saloon, where the great tragedian was waiting to hear me recite.

Only think of the graciousness of this distinguished man, every hour of whose life must have been engrossed by matters of imperial moment, devoting half an hour of his valuable time to an unsophisticated and impudent boy from the country, who ought to have had his ears boxed previous to being sent home by the next train.

The day was bitterly cold. Mr. Macready was wrapped up in a long close-fitting coat with a fur collar. His person did not impress me, but his demeanour did. His features appeared irregular and corrugated. He had a spacious brow and delicately pencilled eyebrows, but his nose was of a most composite order—a mixture of Grecian, Milesian, and snub, with no power of dilation in the nostrils. His eyes were dull and lustreless by day, but at night, as I afterwards discovered, they were orbs of fire. His mouth, though small, was well cut and decided; the lower jaw, which was firm and massive, was very much underhung. His closely shorn and blue-black beard imparted a grim and saturnine cast to his features. He wore his hair, which was beginning to show the marks of time, clubbed in huge masses over his ears.

Just imagine this imposing and portentous figure contrasted with a fair, long-haired, ruddy-cheeked boy of fourteen, clad in a pelisse of light-blue cloth, braided with black, a huge frilled shirt-collar over

his shoulders, a camlet cloak lined with red, and a dogskin collar, and a velvet hanging cap. When I recall this occurrence, even at this period of my life I protest I never do so without a blush of shame at my matchless effrontery. I could no more do such a thing now than I could stand on my head.

"Fools," however, "rush in where angels fear to tread," and when Mr. Macready desired me to give him a taste of my quality, I asked him which he preferred—Hamlet, Young Norval, or Zanga in the "Revenge" (a part which, by the way, although I had studied then, I have never yet acted).

He selected Young Norval, and I spouted, "My name is Norval;" then, gaining confidence as I proceeded, I let him have Hamlet's first soliloquy, and a scene from "Zanga."

I suppose I must have amused him, for he came and patted my head, and told me I was too young. I mentioned Master Betty. He laughed, and said Betty was a phenomenon. (It was evident he did not think me one.) I ventured to suggest that as he was about to produce "King John," I might do for Prince Arthur, and when he told me that unfortunately the part had been already allotted to Miss Priscilla Horton, I thought myself rather ill-used.

Advising me to be a good boy, to go home and go back to school, he brought our interview to an end, and I left the theatre crestfallen and heart-broken.

When I came to the stage-door, I found my friend tired of waiting, had left me, and I was literally

alone in London. There was nothing for it but to follow Mr. Macready's advice and get home, the sooner the better.

In my grief and despair, I took the wrong train, and on my arrival at Rugby, found I could get no further that night. As I had not the means to pay for a bed, in the last extremity I was glad to take shelter under the lee of a haystack to the windward of a snow-storm.

I made a nest for myself in the hay, where, by the way, I narrowly escaped suffocation, for during the night the wind changed, and I was nearly snowed-up.

When I got home, the stern parent gave me a sound beating; but what's bred in the bone will out in the flesh, and no amount of beating could beat the love of the theatre out of my heart.

When I came to town soon afterwards, Macready's management was approaching a termination, and I was unfortunately debarred, through circumstances beyond my control, from witnessing any of his great productions except "Coriolanus," apropos of which I am tempted here to reproduce from memory the opinion of Fox, the famous Unitarian divine and Member for Oldham.

Speaking of this work, of which a certain wasp-ish, small-minded critic, referring to the composite structure of the great tragedian's nasal organ, said, "All was Roman but the Roman's nose," Fox states, as nearly as I can remember (for I am quoting from boyish memory), something like this:

"When Caius Marcius had fallen beneath the assassin's steel, horror and shame struck the Volscians dumb. Each man looked upon the other, as who should say, ''Twas thy hand, not mine, that struck the felon blow!' Then came silence—silence, awful and profound. Presently was heard the sound of a distant trumpet, followed by another, and yet another. Men passed rapidly forth in answer to the signal, doubtless to relate how Caius Marcius fell. Again silence—more eloquent than speech. Ill news spreads fast. From afar arose the cry of women and children; then there came hurrying through the camp a host of fair maidens and stately matrons, piercing the air with lamentations, as they waved their arms aloft, and tossed aside their dishevelled hair. Before them strode a majestic figure, like one of the Eumenides. It was the Roman mother, Volumnia, who confronted, with pale face and flashing eyes, the men who had done to death her lion-hearted son. Next came his fair young wife, Virgilia, and his boy, the little Marcius, followed by Valeria—

> "'The noble sister of Publicola,
> The moon of Rome—chaste as the icicle
> That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,
> And hangs on Dian's temple.'

While with tears and piteous cries they bewailed their warrior dead, the murderers stood aghast, conscience-stricken, and appalled, until at a signal from their leader, the muffled drums and the shrill trump of the clarion made mournful music. Then the

chiefest warriors bore aloft upon their bucklers all that was mortal left of him who, once upon a time, had

> "'Like an eagle in a dovecote
> Fluttered the Volscians in Corioli.'

The soldiers trailed their steel spikes, and as they moved forth with rhythmic tread, the mother of the murdered hero followed, still erect and defiant. Next came the weeping wife and child, and the fair Valeria, while, with eyes cast down, bareheaded and repentant, Tullus Aufidius followed. The sad procession wound, snakelike, round the defile, and as it passed forth towards the city of the Seven Hills, and the music faded into 'a sound so fine, that nothing lived 'twixt it and silence'—the curtain fell, shutting the solemn pageant slowly out of sight."

All this, and more than my poor pen has power to describe, the genius of the poet-player had developed out of the simple stage direction: "Exeunt soldiers, bearing the body of Caius Marcius."

An equally eloquent testimony to the splendour and taste of Macready emanates from Phelps, who himself said to me:

"I tell *ye,* sir, as far as I am qualified to form an opinion, at no period before or since, not even in the palmy days of Garrick, or the Kembles, or the Siddons, has the dramatic art been more poetically and intellectually expounded, or magnificently illustrated, than it was during the Macready *régime.* That Betterton, Booth, and Quin were great

actors, that Garrick was a genius, that the Siddons was a woman of phenomenal gifts, that the Kembles, Young and Elliston were gentlemen and scholars first, and admirable actors after, that Cooke and Kean were lurid meteors, illumining the age and the stage, and that all these great people were surrounded by actors of most distinguished ability, is as true as that the stars are shining over our heads at this moment; but I doubt whether at any time the works of our great masters have ever received in their entirety such admirable rendition and such perfect illustration in every detail as they obtained during the matchless management of William Charles Macready!"

The first work I ever saw during this period at Drury Lane was a now-forgotten play of Sheridan Knowles's, called "The Secretary." It was founded on a novel of Grattan's, called "Highways and Byeways." The time is that of William III., and refers to some plot against the "little Dutchman's" life. The "little Dutchman" on that occasion was a big one; I am rather inclined to think Ryder was his Batavian Majesty. The company were all big men, except Elton. Macready was Colonel Green; Anderson, Wilton Brown (the Secretary); Hudson, the Irish comedian, was a young light comedy Lord, whose name I can't remember; George Bennett was the Duke of Gaveston; Elliot Graham, a giant six feet two or three, played some small part or other; Helen Faucit and Mrs. Warner were both in the piece, and Phelps played Lord Byerdale, who was

"a villain of the deepest dye." Yes, that was the first time I ever saw him, and an atrocious villain I thought he was. Beyond the villainy of Phelps, and the interest which surrounded Anderson (who appeared a veritable Apollo), I remember nothing, save that Macready, who was engaged in the conspiracy, made some touching appeal to Anderson; that he replied, offering to lie down and die for Macready, or something of that kind; that he dropped into a chair, and, falling forward upon the table with his head on his arms, burst into a mighty passion of tears; and that I began crying, too, out of sheer sympathy.

I fear, however, I displayed sad want of taste for a sucking tragedian, inasmuch as I remember far more clearly the after-piece. It was not only the first night of a new play, but it was also the first night I ever saw the famous extravaganza of "Fortunio and his Seven Gifted Servants," written by the ever-genial and accomplished J. R. Planché, whom I was destined to know intimately hereafter.

I can remember, as though it were yesterday, when the curtain rose. Hudson (who was an insolvent King) sang a parody on the well-known song, "In the days that we went gipsying."

I remember, too, Morris Barnet (Monsieur Jacques); he was the impecunious Baron Dunover. Best of all, I remember Priscilla Horton as Fortunio, filling the stage with sunshine whenever she ap-

peared. I can hear her magnificent voice now, as she sang:

"Now rest thee here,
My father dear.
Hush! hush! for up I go
To put a light
Silk pair of tight
Etceteras on below.
Oh! if I look in male attire
But half as well as he
I saw one night dance on the wire,
What an angel I should be!"

Then came her naughty sister (also disguised as a boy), a lady whom I remember chiefly by her marvellously beautiful legs.

Charles Selby, capital comedian and prolific author, was an Emperor Somebody, and the redoubtable Tom Matthews, or W. H. Payne—I am not quite sure which—was one of the gifted servants, endowed with a preternatural "twist," who, to my astonishment, by some occult process, devoured the whole of the bread in the Royal bakery.

Oh! night of golden dreams—of rapture and enchantment, never to be recalled! From that time to this I have never seen a child at the play for the first time but I have envied him!

A gentleman who sat next me in the pit seemed interested—perhaps amused—at my unsophisticated admiration of the play and the players. He appeared to know everything and everybody, and was very communicative.

As we left the theatre, he asked me which way I was going.

When I replied "To Westbourne Green," he said, 'Jump in, young shaver; I'll give you a lift as far as Portman Square."

With the ingenuousness of youth, I confided to him my name and calling, and then modestly inquired his name and occupation.

"Oh, I'm a gardener," he said, "and my name is Joseph Paxton."

When next I heard that name, there was a handle to it. Joseph had become Sir Joseph, about the year of the first great Exhibition.

Soon afterwards I made my way to Drury Lane to see a performance of "Much Ado about Nothing." It was literally "much ado about nothing" for me, inasmuch as the Duke of Sussex had taken it into his head to die that day, and consequently the theatre was closed that night.

The next time I saw Mr. Macready was at a presentation of a piece of plate to him at Willis's Rooms, St. James's. There were a crowd of noble "swells" present, and Macready made a very noble speech, and the piece of plate was a noble piece of work, and that is all I remember about it.

A short time afterwards I came on the stage. After a couple of years' probation, I found myself in Edinburgh, where I again encountered the great tragedian.

By this time the scales had fallen from my eyes, and being thoroughly disillusioned, I was sensible of

the unparalleled audacity of my conduct on our first interview, hence it was that I had sense enough to avoid reminding Mr. Macready of that circumstance.

He opened in "Hamlet," in which I was allotted Marcellus. My trials and troubles had so changed me that, fortunately, he didn't recognise me. I was changed, too, in other ways. My sublime assurance had changed to the most abject trepidation. I trembled from head to foot, and was so paralyzed with stage fright, that I scarcely knew whether I stood on my head or my feet, and could not articulate a single word of the text. He growled and grunted my part as well as his own, and I became so embarrassed that I broke down altogether. Then the "eminent one" said something personally rude. Some proud blood which I inherit enabled me to resent this indignity, and having once found my tongue, I regained my courage and spoke out boldly.

That night an extraordinary and indeed historical scene occurred during the performance. Edwin Forrest, the great American tragedian (ah, you good people, who "gush" about Salvini, should have seen Forrest in "Othello" a quarter of a century ago!), had played an engagement to very indifferent houses, and, sooth to say, had met with but scant courtesy from the management and the press.

He had endeared himself to every member of the company by his modesty, his manliness, and his courtesy. Our manager alone was systematically hostile or disdainfully unsympathetic.

The reason was not far to seek. Forrest's engage-

ient was a failure. Macready's was destined to be success, for while the former was playing to empty enches, the box-office was besieged by eager appli-ants for seats during the forthcoming engagement f the latter.

Besides this, Macready was on terms of friendly ıtimacy with the social and literary big-wigs of the Iodern Athens; while Forrest, who was too manly play the tuft-hunter, knew no one out of the ieatre, and did not care to cultivate casual acquaint-nces. The members of the company were as much npressed with the American's ability as his urbanity.

Mine were only boyish impressions, but they re-ıain unchanged to this day; and I have no hesita-on in proclaiming now, when I have seen, and een repeatedly brought in personal contact with the reatest living actors, that none of them have come ithin measurable distance of what Forrest was then -at the zenith of his powers—in Othello, Damon, ıd Spartacus.

It is given to no actor to be great in everything, and s Richelieu and his Lear were not to be named in e same category with Macready;* while his robust

* Ultimately Lear came to be considered his greatest performance; deed, he himself regarded it as his *chef-d'œuvre.*

In his interesting memoir of the great American tragedian, Mr. awrence Barrett (himself an admirable and accomplished actor) ys:

"Towards the end of his (Forrest's) career he was acting at St. Louis. e was very feeble in health, and his lameness was a source of eat anxiety to him.

"After a performance of Lear, a friend remarked to him: 'I never w you play Lear so well as you did to-night.'

"Whereupon the veteran almost indignantly replied: 'Play Lear,

and virile physique utterly disqualified him for Richard and Hamlet. Indeed, in the latter character, in the very first soliloquy, he struck a note of dissonance which pervaded the entire assumption. When he exclaimed :

> " My father's brother, but no more like my father
> Than I to Hercules !"

the exclamation appeared absurd, for he was Hercules—the Farnese Hercules incarnate ! But that which was his bane in " Hamlet," became his antidote in " The Gladiator "—he was the Gladiator himself.

My mind does not enable me to conceive anything more superbly symmetrical or perfectly majestic than this man in this part.

Bear with me, O gentle reader, while I try to describe this " paragon of animals :"

Imagine, if you can, some marble majesty of the elder world stepping down from its pedestal, instinct with life and motion. The head and shoulders are those of a demi-god. He is dark-eyed, dark-haired, olive-complexioned, with limbs of matchless symmetry—limbs of which every muscle can be clearly discerned through the transparent silken fleshings in which the majestic image is clad from head to foot. A simple flowing garment of marone-coloured stuff, unrelieved by a single ornament, falls from the left shoulder down to the waist on the opposite side, leaving the ample chest and the massive right arm quite bare.

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sir ! I do *not* play Lear ! I play Hamlet, Richard, Shylock, Virginius, if you please ; but by —— ! I *am* Lear !' "

Try to conceive this gorgeous creature, making ıe stage alive with classic grace and dignity, and ıen you may form some faint idea of what this great ctor was like in those days.

The ladies, always the supreme arbiters on the ubject of manly beauty, were wont to maintain, with eminine ardour and a spontaneity of unanimity, that e was the most magnificent man they had ever seen. entirely subscribed to their opinion.

It is true there were some ladies who thought therwise. For instance, Miss Fanny Kemble tates in her diary that in 1832 she went to see ıe young American tragedian act at the Bowery heatre, New York. This distinguished woman is othing if not critical, and she certainly never goes ut of her way to call a spade a pitchfork.

This is her summary of the tragedian : " What a ıountain of a man !"

In a somewhat similar strain writes a would-be ıcetious American journalist : " Well, he was tall, nd he was muscular. Such calves as his I have eldom seen."

Nor have I ; but I have heard of calves even more henomenal—those pertaining to the father of the all-ccomplished Fanny aforesaid—the gallant Charles Kemble, of whom Jack Bannister is reported to have aid : " I now know, Charles, why you are a Catholic. Tis to enable you to obtain a dispensation from the Holy Father to wear the calves of your legs down-ards !"

Coming across Bunn's interesting book " The

Stage," the other day, I note that he speaks of the American tragedian after this fashion :

" There has been no performer that I have seen play, save and except Mr. Kean and his son, who has half the earnestness of Mr. Forrest, and earnestness is half the battle ; and as one proof of it, I can safely say, that when in the arena, where the Gladiator,

"'Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday,'

was required to kneel at the foot of the Emperor, presiding over such 'playthings of a crowd,' he exclaimed to the officer who dictated this duty to him :

"' Kneel thou, whose craven soul was formed for crouching ;
I am here to FIGHT !'

and when I gazed on the noble, athletic form of him who had just given so proper an intimation of his prowess, I felt extremely glad it was not I who had to fight with him. Mr. Forrest is a fine actor, and a fine fellow ; and although we happened to differ very much on one point, and upon one point only, and that was an apocalyptic one, I trust he will accept this faint tribute, whether it meets his eye in the crowded halls of admiring auditors, or

"'Where he stays by the wave of the Schuylkill alone,'

from one who properly estimates his public talent and his private worth."

Having been very scurvily used by the critics, both in Edinburgh and London, Forrest erroneously attributed their hostility to Macready's influence.

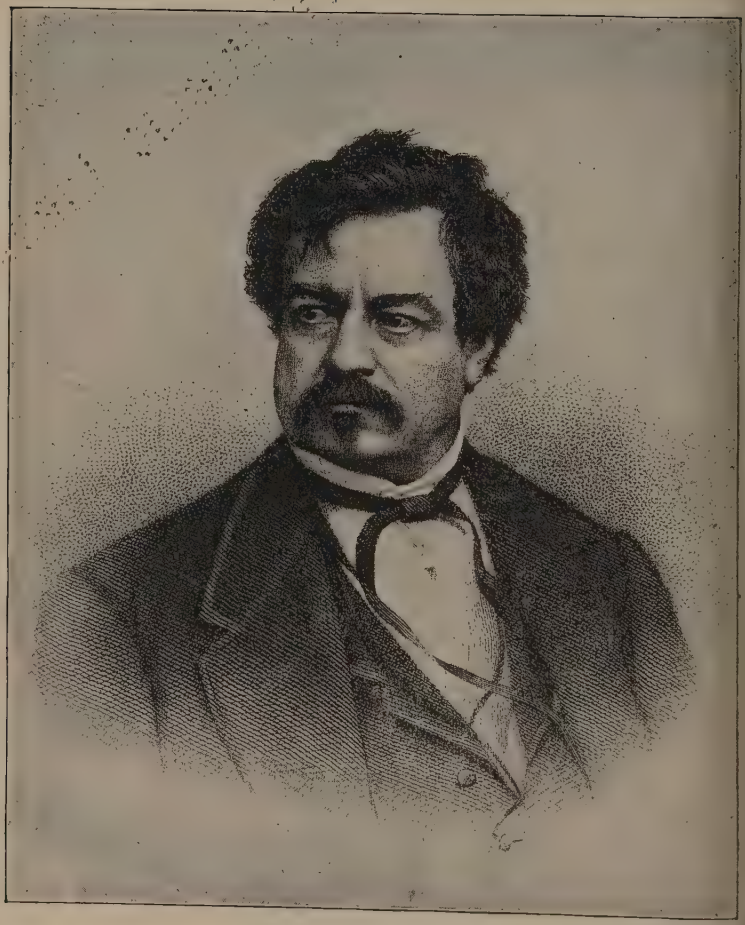
f course the great "Mac" would have disdained to nd himself to anything so ignoble; and, indeed, he ad himself, all through his career, sufficient cause of mplaint against certain members of the fourth tate. It is, however, too true that many of his dmirers and partisans (no less a personage than the te John Forster amongst the number) had put their nives most cruelly and unjustly into Forrest, and he as not the sort of man "to take a blow without ving a thrust."

Unfortunately, the American remained in the city see his rival's *début* in Hamlet. The house was owded in all parts by an eager and excited audi- nce. When the scene drew off, Macready was dis- vered amidst a tempest of applause. I could not alize why on earth the people applauded him. Vith the modesty of youth, I mentally ejaculated, What an antiquated guy!"

He wore a dress the waist of which nearly reached s arms; a hat with a sable plume big enough to ver a hearse; a pair of black silk gloves, much too rge for him; a ballet shirt of straw-coloured satin, hich looked simply dirty; and, what with his gaunt, vkward, angular figure, his grizzled hair, his dark eard close shaven to his square jaws, yet unsoftened y a trace of pigment, his irregular features, his ueer, extraordinary nose—unlike anything else in e shape of a nose I have ever seen—and his long inny neck, he appeared positively hideous. But, ter all, "mind is the brightness of the body," and, ye gods! when he spoke, how he brightened,

illumined, irradiated the atmosphere; his *gaucherie*, his ugliness, disappeared, and he became transformed into the very *beau-idéal* of the most poetic, subtle, intellectual, dramatic, and truly human Prince of Denmark I have ever seen. But although he lifted you to heaven one moment, he brought you to earth the next by some weird eccentricity. For example, in the Play scene, he strutted from side to side, waving his handkerchief above his head, in the most extravagant manner. As he uttered the words, "Of the chameleon's dish I eat, the air, promise-crammed, you cannot feed capons so!" a mighty hiss arose in front—a hiss like that of a steam-engine. At the sound, he trembled and turned pale; then he became livid, and convulsed with passion, absolutely hysterical with rage. Turning to the quarter whence the sibilation proceeded, he bowed derisively, then staggered back and sank into a chair.

Looking to the upper side boxes, on the right, I saw the American tragedian. A conspicuous figure at all times, Forrest was now more conspicuous than ever. At this moment, from the Students' Gallery (which was separated from the upper boxes only by some interfoliated iron-work) a cry arose of "Turn him out!" I can see him now. The square brow, the noble, majestic head, the dark eyes flashing fire, the pallor of the white face enhanced by his blue-black beard, which contrasted strangely with his turned-down white collar (an unusual mode of wearing the collar at that time), his jaw set like a bull-dog's, his arms folded on his broad chest. As he rose and faced



EDWIN FORREST.

is would-be assailants, he looked exactly as he used
o look in "The Gladiator," when he said, "Let them
ome; we are prepared."

The people on the other side of the screen
bsolutely recoiled, as if they expected some king of
he forest to leap from his iron den amongst them;
hey then concluded to let the American alone. On
he stage the actors were at a standstill; in the
uditorium the multitude were awed into silence.
fter a short pause, I suppose the man's better
ature prevailed, for Edwin Forrest slowly turned
way, and left the house.

Then Macready, like a man possessed, leaped
to the breach, and took the house by storm.
urely he must have been inspired by the ordeal
rough which he had passed. Such a delirium of
xcitement for actors and audience as followed that
lay scene and the Closet scene I have rarely, if
er, witnessed. Next day the papers were full of
is miserable affair.

The English and the American tragedians had
een on terms of friendly intimacy. Macready had
een an old friend of the lady who afterwards un-
rtunately became Mrs. Forrest, and he was present
their ill-omened marriage.

After the scene in Edinburgh a hollow friendship
ve place to open enmity. There were statements
d counter-statements. In his diary Macready
ys:

"EDINBURGH, March 2, 1846.—Acted Hamlet,
ally with particular care, energy, and discrimina-

tion. The audience gave less applause to the first soliloquy than I am in the habit of receiving; but I was bent on acting the part, and I felt, if I can feel at all, that I had strongly excited them, and that their sympathies were cordially, indeed enthusiastically, with me. On reviewing the performance, I can conscientiously pronounce it one of the very best I have given of Hamlet. At the waving of the handkerchief before the play, and 'I must be idle,' a man on the right side of the stage—upper boxes or gallery, but said to be upper boxes—hissed! The audience took it up, and I waved the more, and bowed derisively and contemptuously to the individual. The audience carried it, though he was very stanch to his purpose. It discomposed me, and alas! might have ruined many; but I bore it down. I thought of speaking to the audience, if called on, and spoke to Murray about it, but he, very discreetly, dissuaded me. Was called for and very warmly greeted. Ryder came and spoke to me, and told me that the hisser was observed, and said to be a Mr. W——, who was in company with Mr. Forrest. The man writes in the *Journal*, a paper depreciating me and eulogizing Mr. F., sent to me from this place."

"Forrest came back to his own country with a raging heart against England and Englishmen, and particularly against Macready. The case became an international one—the quarrel of John Bull and his young offspring, Brother Jonathan. Forrest's reception became a matter of patriotism; the Demo-

racy rallied as one man to vindicate his honour and hat of the nation insulted in his person. A storm vas brewing which only waited the return of his ival to burst and scatter death and destruction in its ourse."—Lawrence Barrett, *passim.*

At length (in September, 1848) Macready did eturn, and was hissed in Philadelphia (Forrest's ative city), whereupon he addressed the audience n allusion to the scene in Edinburgh. Forrest eplied to this accusation after this fashion :

" Mr. Macready, in his speech last night to the udience assembled at the Arch Street Theatre, nade allusion, I understand, to an 'American actor' vho had the temerity on one occasion 'openly to iss him.' This is true, and, by the way, the only ruth which I have been enabled to gather from the vhole scope of his address. But why say 'an American actor'? Why not openly charge me vith the act? for I did it, and publicly avowed it in *The Times* newspaper, of London, and at the same ime asserted my right to do so.

" On the occasion alluded to, Mr. Macready introuced a fancy dance into his performance of Hamet, which I designated as a *pas de mouchoir*, and vhich I hissed, for I thought it a desecration of the cene ; and the audience thought so, too ; for, a few ights afterwards, when Mr. Macready repeated the art of Hamlet with the same 'tomfoolery,' the inelligent audience greeted it with a universal hiss."*

It is regrettable enough that a man gifted with

* Untrue.—J. C.

such generous impulses could have suffered his fancied wrongs to have goaded him in a moment of madness into an act so scandalous; but no words can be found strong enough to reprehend the tone of mind which permitted him in cold blood to justify conduct so unbecoming an actor and a gentleman. Oh! "the pity of it" that the matter didn't end with this wordy warfare, but alas! it led to that disgraceful and dreadful business in New York, the riots, the loss of life, and Macready's subsequent flight to England in disguise.

To return, however, to Edinburgh.

During this engagement I acted in all Mac's plays. In "Lear" I had a small part of a few lines. It was my duty to assist in carrying the "eminent one" off the stage, when he is supposed to fall asleep in the Heath scene. We had a long and fatiguing rehearsal—Mac's rehearsals were no joke. At that time it was the fashion to wear gaiter-bottomed trousers. My continuations fitted like my skin, and I was strapped up within an inch of my life. The moment had arrived when I had to lift up the sleeping king. I was in doubt as to whether my precious pantaloons (for they were quite new) would stand the strain. While I paused, dubitating as to whether I might venture on the experiment, Lear growled, "Err—now then, sir; err—look alive." I hesitated no longer, but "bent each corporal agent to this terrible feat," when lo! bang! squash! smash! my unfortunate trousers burst in every direction. Mac, whose eyes were shut all the time, and who was utterly oblivious

f my unfortunate position, growled out like a bear ith a sore head :

" Err—err, sir, am I to lie here till the middle of ext week ? Why, err—err in the name of fate, on't you lift me ?"

" Because I can't, sir."

" Because you can't, sir ; err—a great strapping oung fellow like you ; stuff and nonsense ; why—rr—can't you ?"

" Because I've burst my bags," I exclaimed, as bolted, amidst roars of laughter.

When next I met the great tragedian, during s farewell engagement at Bristol, I, then in my ghteenth year, had blossomed into a full-fledged agedian myself.

His irascibility and exacerbation were notorious. veryone was nervous at the thought of meeting m, and I really think I was more nervous than nyone. He had not recognised me when I was the ranks, but now that I had come to the re, my all-pervading fear was that he might cognise in the immature tragedian of the Bath d Bristol Theatres the precocious boy who had e audacity to spout before him in the saloon of ld Drury, and that consequently I might be taken t of my parts.

Only one member of the company remained im-rvious to nerves. This was a stalwart wig block, o had a profound belief in his manly beauty, his wer to mash the too susceptible fair, and his istic ability. He was wont to pose himself nightly

before the mirror in the green-room, and apostrophize himself thus, *coram populo:* "Yes, George, my boy, you have the figure of a man and the bearing of a gentleman, and the girls, poor creatures! can't help admiring you; and you can act—yes, by Jove, there is no doubt about that."

This gentleman was popularly known as the "Big Pot." A short time previous he had met Macready for one night, and had actually acted De Mauprat with him.

The "Big Pot" was never weary of descanting upon his peaceful triumphs on this occasion, and was wont to state that at the end of the play Macready had sent for him to his dressing-room to compliment him. All this, and much more, he related to James Chute, the manager for Mrs. Macready, manageress of the Bath and Bristol Theatres, and the great Mac's mother-in-law. When he went up to town to consult the eminent one as to the casting of the pieces, Chute mentioned the name of the "Big Pot" for certain parts, such as Malcolm and De Beringhen, etc.

"Err—'Big Pot, Big Pot,'" said Mac, "I don't know the name."

"Oh yes, you do, sir; you met him at Blankstone, where he played De Mauprat."

"Blankstone—'Richelieu.' Oh, good heavens, that was one of my black nights; and De Mauprat—De Mauprat, too? I remember the beast; can I ever forget him? a loose-limbed, florid-complexioned, crude young man."

"The description is fairly accurate, sir; but he

ssured me that when the play was over you sent
or him to your room."

"So I did—so I did; but, by Jove! it was to blow
im up for having slaughtered me!"

On his return to Bristol, Chute, related this story
ith embellishments; but Mr. Big Pot's vanity was
ıvulnerable, and he replied: "Mere spite and burn-
ıg envy, by the gods! Wait till Mac sees me at
ehearsal, and I'll bet an oyster supper to a red
erring that I'm the only man with whom he shakes
ands."

When the rehearsal of the opening play, "Macbeth,"
ook place, everyone looked anxiously for the meeting
etween the great tragedian and the "Great Pot."

When Macbeth first encounters Malcolm (the part
nacted by the Big Pot), it is customary for
Bellona's bridegroom" to shake hands with the
Heir Apparent. As he instinctively extended his
and, Macready saw Mr. Big Pot winking at the
nlookers with a broad grin, as who should say,
Look here—make no error about it—I'm going
o win that red herring!" At the sight the irate
ragedian drew himself up in disgust, avoided the
roffered hand—growled "Beast!"—his favourite
xpletive—and crossed into the O.P. corner amidst
roar of laughter.

Possibly there was not much to be said for the
ood taste of either Mac or his victim; but the fun
f it was irresistible, and poor Big Pot never heard
ıe last of it.

Being the leading man of the company, I had the

honour of acting Othello to Macready's Iago. Talk about being nervous! I was a bundle of nerves during every night of his engagement.

The "Othello" night was a proud one for me—indeed, I had reason to be proud to be permitted to try my prentice hand beside such an Iago. What a masterpiece it was! what a revelation of subtle, poetic, vigorous, manly, many-minded devilry! The audience were more than usually kind—and after I had got my first plunge over, I took heart of grace; and by the time I had reached the third act, I forgot that he was anything more than "mine ancient." I remembered only that I was Othello.

Neither then nor now could I act with gloves on my hands. I had removed, as I thought, all traces of the pigment with which I had "made up" from the palms of my hands, but as my excitement increased, the wretched stuff seemed to ooze out of my very pores. When I came to the famous speech:

"Villain! be sure you prove my love is false,"

I sprang upon Iago, and seized him by the throat. I remembered nothing until I found that I had literally flung him bodily down upon the stage, and stood above him, erect, and quivering with wrath. On his part, he growled like an angry lion. The incident was as unprecedented as it was unpremeditated, and its effect upon the audience was electrical. They got up, and cheered, and for some time the progress of the play was interrupted. This gave me time to collect myself, when, to my horror, I perceived that, in the tempest of my rage, I had

orn open Iago's vest, and, worse still, left the marks f my ten fingers on his beautiful white cashmere ress. When we came off the stage together he lared at me, and growled :

" Err—well, sir, what have you to say ?"

" I'm very sorry, Mr. Macready."

" Err—sorry, sir. By ——, you sprang upon me ore like a young tiger than a human being !"

" I was carried away by the passion of the scene ; must ask you to remember the novelty of the posi- on in which I have been placed, being permitted attempt so great a part beside so distinguished an ctor as yourself."

" Don't humbug me, sir !"

" I scorn to attempt it ; nevertheless, the honour ou have done me to-night might well have turned n older head than mine. Pray, sir, make some llowance for my excitement."

At this he relaxed into a grim smile, and growled :

" Say no more—say no more—only remember the ext time you play this part with me, confine your xcitement to your mind, and not to your muscles !"

During this engagement Mr. Macready acted Iacbeth twice, Hamlet twice, Iago twice, Werner nce, Virginius once, Richelieu twice, Lear twice, ord Townley (" Provoked Husband "), and Ienry IV. (Act IV., Part II.) for his benefit.

Although these plays were done from night to ght, they were admirably acted ; needless to say, ad not the company been both numerous and effi- ent, they could not have been done at all.

Although declining "into the vale of years," and unassisted by Ryder, who previously had taken much of the hard work upon himself, Macready kept us day after day from ten to four o'clock, following every situation, every scene, every line, every word of the text, with an interest as eager and unabated as if he had been acting each play for the first instead of the last time. It is true that he flurried, and worried, and bullied us, but his petulance was peppered with brains; his irascibility arose more from dyspepsia than bad temper; and everything he touched was irradiated with the sacred fire of genius. "Hamlet," "Othello," "Macbeth" (the latter with the music) were rehearsed letter perfect, words and music, with only one rehearsal; but for the other plays we had two. Only think of this, young ladies and gentlemen, who nowadays have a hundred rehearsals for one part!

I had acted Othello, Macduff, and the Ghost frequently before; but Ulric, Icilius, De Mauprat, Edgar, and the Prince of Wales were all new parts, which involved sitting up half the night with wet towels on my head and strong coffee in my stomach.

It was a matter of honour to be letter perfect in these great works, and, indeed, the imputation of being imperfect in the text was considered a grievous stigma upon an actor's professional reputation in those days.

There was a strong feeling of *esprit de corps* amongst us, too. We all assisted in the music of

Macbeth." As leading man, I set the example, nd rushed off from the murder scene, and the next inute was on in the stage as a witch.

We had four leading ladies: Mrs. Pauncefort, then young and lovely girl, the beautiful Mrs. Mad-ocks, Mrs. Marcus Elmore, and Mrs. Faucit Saville. Vhen the latter lady played Lady Macbeth, the other ree Lady Macbeths sat on in the banquet scene as eechless gentlewomen.

I have before mentioned Macready's irascibility nd exacerbation, but you had only to bell the cat bring him to book—*e.g.*, on the morning of his enefit at Bristol, I met him in the street and owed; he did not respond, and passed on in silence.

When we met on the stage, half an hour later, for ne rehearsal of "Henry IV.," he bade me good norning. Remembering his discourtesy, half an our previous, I did not respond.

"I said—err—good-morning, sir," he said.

"So did I, half an hour ago, sir," I replied.

"To me, sir?"

"Yes, to you, sir."

"Where?"

"In the street."

"'Pon my honour, I didn't see you. Besides, my oung friend, if you—err—had no liver, or at least one worth speaking of, an overflow of bile, com-ined with chronic dyspepsia—above all, if you had ried the experiment of—err—living upon two utton chops for three weeks—you wouldn't be—rr—Lord Chesterfield to everybody!"

Of course, there was no getting over an argument like this.

It is scarcely possible to convey even the approximation of an idea of what we, the youth of that day, gained by being brought into contact with that master mind. He poured forth treasures of knowledge in reckless, never-ending profusion. Our only difficulty in following his directions was, that sometimes they were given *sotto voce*, and in a growl.

In rehearsing the last scene of Werner, he said to me:

"Sir, will you be good enough to—err—to do me the favour when I say—err—err—to stand—err—err—and don't move hand or foot till I lift my—err—err—— You understand me?"

"Not quite, sir."

"Good God! Am I not speaking the English language?"

"Undoubtedly; but if you will kindly tell me once more where I am to stand when you say—err—err—I won't move hand or foot till you lift your—err—err——"

He looked at me dubiously, and even angrily, for a moment, then repeated the direction with clearness and precision.

Apropos of Mr. Macready's remarkable vocal eccentricities, Mr. Murdoch—the eminent American actor, whom I remember with pleasure to have seen act Young Mirabel ("The Inconstant") at the Haymarket—in his interesting book, "The Stage," accounts for them by a very ingenious hypothesis.

He says : " The ordinary current of his articulation was marked by a certain catching of the breath, preceding the utterance of the initial syllable of certain words. A sudden catch of the glottis, which causes a short cough-like sound to be heard previous to the articulative movement of the voice, was a distinctly marked characteristic of Kean's utterance.

"This peculiar organic act is the result of a dropping of the jaw and consequent depression of the larynx : it gives strength to the muscles which are called into play, and controls the organs of vocality, thus enabling the speaker to execute the vowel sound from what may be called the carduous parts of the mouth—that space which includes the roots of the tongue, the glottis, and pharynx.

" This power, when joined to the guttural murmur or deeply aspirated quality of the voice, is a strong element of expressive force in the suppressive utterance of passionate language in the drama. . . .

"In his youth, Macready possessed a voice of great clearness, compass, and beauty. . . .

"The performances, however, lacked the so-termed originality of effect which brings an audience to their feet and makes them hoarse with approving plaudits.

" Disappointed in his hopes, and comparing his acting with that of other tragedians who were more successful, he accepted in due time the idea so prevalent that what is popular must be perfect. He therefore remodelled his style by degrees, though it

may be without intending imitation, and acquired some of the peculiarly expressive traits of certain distinguished performers then masters of the situation in London.

"In consequence of this change of base, his acting became more theatrical or stagey. His fervour and impulse were not in the least abated, and were still influenced by taste and good judgment, which it was not in his nature to lose sight of; but his effects were produced more in conformity with the fashion of the times, and were at last pronounced brilliant manifestations of artistic skill.

"Thus he established a reputation of increased pecuniary worth, and finally became the embodiment of what was ultimately termed the highest development of genius."

If Murdoch's theory be—as it seems to be—correct, it is a lamentable conclusion to arrive at.

It appears to be certain that Macready's "voice lost its clear ring and other attractive qualities of tone, and became harsh, and was at times repulsive; this, in addition to his strongly-marked peculiarities of speech, became as much the nature of the actor as if it had been born with him."

Thousands of illustrations of this great actor's vocal eccentricities might be given, but none more amusing than the following:

A poor utility actor had to announce the phenomenon of the "moving grove" in the last act of Macbeth.

In great perturbation he exclaimed :

"Within these three miles you may see it *a*-coming."

"No, no, sir!" growled Mac. "Err—err, '*a*-coming' won't do. Try back!"

The poor fellow did try back, but still he saw the grove "*a*-coming."

"Good God, no! Err—err—no, no! This is blank verse, and a single misplaced—err—syllable—err—destroys the measure. When you say—err—'*a*-coming,' don't you perceive the *a* is an interpolated sound? Surely you know that—err—'coming' begins with—err—err—a *c*, and therefore you should say :

'Within these three miles you may see it—err—err—err—coming.'

Don't you see, sir—err—don't you—err—see?"

"No, sir, I don't," replied the mortified messenger. "I only see that I put *one* big *A* before 'coming,' while you put half a dozen little ones!"

During the rehearsal of Werner, Mr. Macready told me how he came to improvise a sublime gag in the last scene of this gloomy play.

He acted the part for the first time in that very theatre. Carried away by the passion of the scene, he rushed down to Charles Kemble Mason, who played Gabor, and demanded, "Are you a father?" Then he whispered, "Say 'No';" whereupon Gabor shouted "No!" and Macready, in a burst of paternal emotion, rejoined :

"Then you cannot feel for misery like mine!"

and the pit rose at him.

It was under exactly similar circumstances that he introduced the famous line:

"Oh for an hour of youth!"

in the fourth act of "Richelieu," apropos of which, of all his performances, I venture to think this was the greatest and most perfect creation. I had seen Forrest before him; I have seen all the great actors since; I have myself acted the part more frequently than any living man, but I have never yet seen anyone approach within measurable distance of Macready in this wonderful impersonation. His smile, when Julie de Mauprat sat at his feet, irradiated his grim face with an angelic beauty. His business with the sword and the pen in two minutes took the auditor back two ages; one moment he was the mail-clad warrior fighting before Rochelle, smiting "the stalwart Englisher to the waist;" the next he was the feeble but mighty statesman, wielding a weapon more potent than the sword of Charles Martel. The famous "Never-say-fail" speech thrilled through one like a trumpet-call.

His tenderness to his orphan ward contrasted in strong relief to his scornful denunciation of the traitor Baradás, while his love of country dominated over all. In the last scene, when, awaking from his simulated trance, he leaped up, and, dilating to preternatural proportions, exclaimed, "There, at my feet!" he realized a picture, once seen, never to be forgotten. When in this situation he glided down the stage, I protest he always suggested to me the Divine Image grown gray and ghastly through the

JOHN VANDENHOFF AS CORIOLANUS.

efflux of the ages and once more floating over the Sea of Galilee.

For subtlety, intellectuality, and vigour his Macbeth has never been approached in our time; and he was the only possible Lear I have ever seen.

He galvanized the dull and dreary abortion of Werner into life, while his Virginius—but words are feeble to express my admiration of this matchless creation. In Edinburgh I remember he wore a beastly bald wig which made him hideous; in Bristol he wore his own beautiful and abundant iron-gray hair curled, and certainly looked superbly handsome.

His Lord Townley appeared to me affected, lachrymose and tedious; but his Henry IV. was of the highest order of excellence. His Iago I have before spoken of. His Othello, which I saw him act in Edinburgh, was the least satisfactory and impressive of his Shakespearian performances. I may here remark that he was the only actor I ever saw make up for the Moor with an entirely black face—a face, in fact, black as a Christy minstrel. Possibly his comparative failure in Othello may have arisen from the fact that he never liked the part—so, at least, he told me.

Actors are not always just to each other, but the late Mr. Vandenhoff, in speaking of Macready, said to me, "Except Macbeth and Iago, I never cared for Mac in Shakespeare. But I have acted Richelieu and Virginius hundreds of times, I have seen others, good actors too, try their hands on them; but in

these two parts we are none of us in the same century with him."

T. P. Cooke also said to me, "I hate him! D——n him! I hate the growling beast! But he can act, and no mistake! Kean tried to play Virginius after him, but he couldn't touch him, and threw up the part. I saw him once play Ruthven, in a play on the subject of Mary Stuart, and the fellow positively curdled my blood. I was glad to get out of the theatre!"

To me the most remarkable thing about Macready, more remarkable even than his marvellous ability, was, that with all his knowledge, his skill, his culture, his accomplishments, he had never been able to eradicate his native awkwardness and angularity. To the last he could not walk or stand gracefully. It was not from lack of trying to overmaster the defect, for Phelps told me that, after long and fatiguing rehearsals of Henry V. at Drury Lane, Mac devoted hours to walking about the stage with "his cuisses on his thighs," but all to no avail, for at night he tossed and tumbled about literally like a hog in armour.

When he came to anchor and stood quite still, from the front point of view his right leg and knee invariably described the section of an angle; but if seen from the sides, his head was thrown back till it was fully six inches out of plumb with his heels. As to fencing, he handled a foil like a pitchfork; but the glamour of his genius blinded his auditors to these blemishes.

It was not until he had finished his engagement at Bath that I ventured to reveal myself. There had been a hitch in the last scene of "Lear," which I had the presence of mind to avert by taking it up and covering it. When the play was over, a message came, requesting me to step round to his room. I had a vivid recollection of his interview with the Big Pot, and expected a bullying for having dared to tamper with the text. To my astonishment he came forward, and, taking me by the hand, said:

"Thank you; you—err—err—saved the end of the play. Err — we — err — have met before, I think."

"Yes, in Edinburgh, on the night of the Forrest row."

"Err—yes—a miserable business; but—err—we had met before that?"

"Yes; in the saloon of Drury Lane."

"Err—good God! I thought so; you were the boy with the chubby cheeks and the long hair, and the blue frock and the camlet cloak—I thought so."

"Did you, sir, really?"

"Yes—really. Now listen to words of wisdom. I fear the poetic drama is dead; if it were alive, your possibilities might be considerable. Do you know the difference between talent and genius?"

"Not clearly."

"Genius is a misnomer. Look! that's the difference between the one and the other," and he made two horizontal marks one above the other with his

thumbnail on the painted wall. "The lower line is —err—talent; the higher—err—is the same quality cultivated to the highest standard of—err—perfection; then it becomes—err—genius. You have reached the—err—one, but you've a long way to go before you reach the—err—other. Now remember the whole Law and the Prophets lie in Sir Joshua Reynolds' well-known axiom, 'Excellence was never granted to—err—man but as the reward of—err—labour.' Err—err—can I do anything to help you?"

"Yes; I should like to go to Edinburgh for the leading business."

"Very well; call on me to-morrow at one o'clock, and I'll give you a letter to Murray."

When I called the following day, I found my letter waiting; lunch was waiting too. The great man was in an amiable mood, and during luncheon I ventured to draw him out about some of the great actors of the past.

I was near putting my foot in it, though, at the beginning of the interview, by an indiscreet reference to Charles Kean, between whom and the eminent one little love existed. The truth was, their respective partisans were always making mischief between them. The law of dramatic copyright, too, was even in a more unsatisfactory condition then than it is now; hence Mac had no sooner popularized a work in town than Kean reaped the advantage in the country accruing from its London reputation. This was more especially the case with the "Lady of

Lyons" and "Money," in which he anticipated Macready everywhere.

"The father," said Macready, "was a great man; but the son is a small one." (By-the-bye, this scarcely tallies with Mac's wishing to engage Charles as a member of his company). "Yes, sir; the father was a drunken blackguard, but oh, my ——! he could act. There was another man who could act, but he never had a chance. That was the unfortunate Conway—a magnificent, specially gifted creature. He was an enormous favourite in this very city until the flattery of Madame Piozzi, and a number of other stupid women, turned his head. When he came to town, that cynical literary ruffian Theodore Hook crucified him, and the poor fellow went to the bad altogether—went down and down, till at last he became a prompter, and I think a Methodist preacher, and untimately committed suicide. Miss O'Neil? Eh? She was youth, grace, beauty combined with a sweetness of pathos and tenderness which was irresistible. Charles Young? Well, he was delightful, amusing, accomplished, sound, sensible and scholar-like, but always Charles Young. As for the Kembles, well, they were the Kembles; John Kemble's career finished when mine was beginning. He was stately and classic, and always earned my admiration and excited my sympathy, but scarcely stirred a deeper feeling. Charles Kemble possessed the same qualities in a lesser degree. Elliston was the most accomplished all-round actor I ever saw, but as to what is called genius, the nearest approach

to what I understand that to be was to be found in Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Siddons. I was a youth when I met these wonderful creatures, and I acted with them both in my father's theatre.

"I played with Mrs. Jordan in 'The Child of Nature.' She was a gorgeous creature, buoyant, ebullient, delicious—in fact, she was comedy incarnate. With Mrs. Siddons I played Young Norval and Beverley. Although past the meridian of life; in beauty and in grandeur she was beyond anything you can imagine—a queen, a goddess—no, not quite a goddess, else she could never have married that miserable scrub of a low comedian. But oh! her Isabella and her Mrs. Beverley; but we'll talk about this some other time, for here—err—comes my man, and I must be off if—err—I am to catch the train. Now remember what I've said to you; above all, be a good boy; steer clear of—err—err—women and wine, and bad company. Good-bye, and—err—good luck!"

Six weeks later he telegraphed me to go to Liverpool to play the opposite parts with him there, but Mrs. Macready could not, or would not, let me go, and I saw no more of him till his farewell engagement at the Haymarket eight months later.

Happening to be in town for two or three nights, I went to the pit, and nearly got my ribs squashed in the struggle to get in. When I did get in, to my intense mortification I found he did not act that night.

The bill was changed from "Lear" to "The Serious Family," with James Wallack, Ben Webster,

Buckstone, Henry Vandenhoff, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Mrs. Buckingham White, Miss Reynolds, and Mrs. Clifford; and the farce of "The Laughing Hyena" (its first night), which was totally damned, but which survived its damnation, and is to this day highly popular. Then there were Keely and Mrs. Keely in "The Guardian Angel."

I was always somewhat heterodox in my opinions, and was awfully disappointed in Wallack's Murphy Maguire; he appeared to me like an elderly yet handsome swaggering Bob in dress clothes. Webster was like a Somersetshire squire out for a holiday; Harry Vandenhoff, though, was a sprightly and splendid-looking young fellow, while "Bucky" was inimitable in Aminadab Sleek.

Mrs. Fitzwilliam, one of the most versatile and accomplished women I have ever met, illustrated in fine form the square peg in the round hole, inasmuch as she was utterly out of place in the fashionable Mrs. Ormsby Delmaine. Miss Reynolds and Mrs. White were all grace and charm in Mrs. and Emma Torrens, but Mrs. Clifford towered above them all as Lady Sowerby Creamly.

Keely I thought sleepy and dreary in the Guardian Angel, but Mrs. Keely was divine.

I prolonged my stay in town to see "Lear" on the Monday. On this occasion, James Wallack was himself as Edgar, manly, picturesque, pathetic and powerful.

Mrs. Warner, whom I saw that night for the first and last time, was powerful and vindictive as Goneril,

while as for Mac's Lear, it was, as Victor Hugo says of the great Frederick's "Ruy Blas," "not a transformation, but a transfiguration."

A few months immediately after Macready's retirement from the stage as Macbeth at Drury Lane, a farewell banquet was given to him. It was originally intended to take place at the Freemasons' Tavern, but the demand for tickets was so great that it was transferred to the Hall of Commerce, in Threadneedle Street. There was a rush for seats, and when I applied, I was told I was too late. I then made an appeal to Charles Dickens, in whose hands all the arrangements were, and he wrote me a characteristically courteous autograph letter, enclosing a ticket.

Still dependent upon the resources of a country actor's slender salary, the expenses of the journey had to be looked at very carefully. It will be remembered that the first time I saw Mr. Macready I had to travel third-class, and I was restricted to the same mode of locomotion on the last occasion. The train arrived at Euston Square barely in time to admit of my driving direct to Threadneedle Street, hence I had to travel in evening dress from Coventry, where I was then located. I wrapped myself up in my Hamlet cloak, some furs and rugs, and made my way from Coventry to the Hall of Commerce.

When I arrived there, by some mistake on the part of the officials, I was shown, cloak, rugs, and furs included, into a brilliantly lighted waiting-room,

nearly filled with swells. I suppose my eccentric appearance attracted attention; everybody seemed to stare at me, and I felt somewhat embarrassed. A tall, slender, supercilious-looking, fair-haired coxcomb with Hyperion locks and faultless waxed moustache, a Roman nose, a wonderfully arranged white choker, a great shaggy wraprascal over his elegant evening dress, attracted my attention, and I may say excited my anger. He had posed himself with indolent grace, leaning against the mantelpiece with his legs crossed. His handsome aristocratic head rested on his left hand, while with his right he put up his eye-glass and took stock of me from head to foot, as who should say, "What wild man of the woods have we here?"

I felt myself crimson to the ear-tips. While I was thinking I should like to punch this gentleman's head, a confused murmur of voices and a general sensation announced the arrival of the guest of the evening.

From the accident of my position, I happened to be the very first person with whom Mr. Macready came in contact. He shook hands, gave me a gracious welcome, and passed on to the fair-haired swell. "Ah, my dear Sir Edward," said he, and to my astonishment I discovered that this lordly exquisite was no less a personage than the author of 'Richelieu." My anger, however, died out in speechless admiration, when, upon Mr. Macready doing me the honour to introduce me, Sir Edward murmured a few commonplace courtesies.

That was a red-letter day, or, rather, night, to me. Apart from the occasion itself, such an assemblage of distinguished people has never been got together since. Fortunately for me, although unfortunately for himself, Alfred Wigan, who was on the committee, was taken ill, and had to go home, having previously ceded me his seat between Thackeray and the Chevalier Bunsen, the Prussian Ambassador, both of whom were very affable and complaisant to the young man from the country.

Certain incidents connected with this memorable visit come back to me now as freshly as if they had taken place but yesterday. First, Fox, the Unitarian preacher, made a long-winded and grandiloquent speech, and was called to time; next, Mr. John Forster ladled out, or, I should say, roared forth, an ode written for the occasion by Tennyson, commencing, "Macready, moral, great, sublime!" then Phelps, who was to have returned thanks for the chairman, turned tail and bolted; and Charles Kemble, whom I saw for the first and last time on that occasion, made a somewhat irrelevant speech, in the middle of which he "dried up," and sat down.

"Heavens!" thought I, "can this deaf, blatant, obtuse old gentleman with the broken nose be all that remains of that mirror of chivalry, the peerless Faulconbridge, the gallant Orlando, the matchless Romeo, and the magnanimous Mark Antony?"

Bulwer was the chairman, and made a speech which read famously in the papers next day, but sounded very badly that night. He was accredited with having

ased Sir Fwedewick Blount in "Money" on his wn peculiarities, and I can well believe it.

One of his sentences still rings in my ears. Here is:

"I think, gentlemen, you will all agwee with me iat evewy gweat actah has'th his peculiah mannah, s well as evewy gweat witer has'th his'th peculiah yle."

Thackeray, who had to propose "the health of ie ladies," would, I thought, have broken down very moment, not from the cause assigned by some d——d good-natured friends" (of that I can speak ith positive certainty), but from sheer nervousness. here had been bitter blood between the "noble ayornet" and the author of the "Yellow Plush apers," and it seemed to me as if the former noted ie latter's discomfiture with an amused and languid isdain, which overlaid a somewhat deeper-rooted eling.

Charles Dickens (a capital after-dinner speaker) as at his best, and ranged from grave to gay with qual facility; indeed, his speech was as florid as his ostume, which was striking enough in all conscience. Ie wore a blue dress-coat, faced with silk and aflame ith gorgeous brass buttons, a vest of satin, with white satin collar and a wonderfully-embroidered irt. When he got up to speak, his long curly hair, s luxuriant whiskers, his handsome face, his bright es, his general aspect of geniality and *bonhomie*, esented a delightful picture. I made some in-nuous remark upon the subject to Thackeray, who

blandly rejoined, "Yes, the beggar is beautiful as a butterfly, especially about the shirt-front."

The speech of the night was, however, Macready's. When he arose, a thunder of acclamation broke forth that shook tables and glasses, walls and windows, till, verily, the latter seemed as if they were going to tumble about our ears. It was not alone that he was the hero of the occasion, and that all men's hearts went out to him, but chiefly because he knew how to speak. His resonant, sonorous voice rang round the place like the shrill blast of a clarion, or died away like the soft breathing of the lute; but whether diminuendo or crescendo, every word was clearly articulated, and made its mark.

As far as I could see through my own tears, there was scarcely a single dry eye in the vicinity. When all was over, he moved away through an avenue of over-wrought men, eager, excited, and hysterical as women. They clutched his hands, or, failing that, merely touched his coat, while many who could not get near him cried, "God bless you, sir!" or "God bless you, Mac!"

In my mind's eye I can see him now, as I saw him then, yet that was the last time I ever saw in the flesh the idol of my boyish dreams. That night, at the maturity of his powers and in the zenith of his fame, he passed for ever from the fierce light of public life into

> "That which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends."

One heard occasionally of family losses, which rendered his home desolate; of a new and noble devotion which had solaced his declining years; of the active part he took in educating the children of his poorer neighbours; of an ovation at the Varsities when he went to Oxford and Cambridge to read; of an occasional visit with Charles Dickens to the theatres. And so the years passed away, till Time seemed to have forgotten that William Macready had ever been.

One night, some twelve or fourteen years ago, as I was going on the stage of the York Theatre for Charles Surface, a telegram was handed to me. My old friend, James Chute, Macready's brother-in-law, had flashed over the wire these words:

"Macready is dead. The funeral takes place to-morrow, at two o'clock, at Kensal Green."

That night I played Charles with a heavy heart. When the play was over, I took the express and came up to town, and on the morrow I joined the sorrowing multitude who flocked around his grave to pay the last tribute of respect to the great tragedian's memory.

Would that this were my last impression of Macready! but alas! since his death his diary has been published. It has been edited with pious care by his friend Sir Frederick Pollock, but no amount of editorial supervision can eliminate or smooth away the discontent, smallness of mind, jealousy of his rivals, absolute loathing of his art, and rank Philistinism which appear to be its predominant characteristics; and the best that can be said of it is,

that 'twere better, far better, for the fame of the actor and the reputation of the man, if this ill-advised work had never seen the light.

The diarist has scarcely a word of commendation for the brother and sister artists who did so much to enhance his celebrity, or for the art to which he was indebted for name, fame, and social distinction. He has, however, the manliness not to attempt to disguise his humble origin. His grandfather was an obscure Dublin tradesman, and had not his father's more ambitious aspirations led him to devote himself to dramatic art, he himself, instead of being a distinguished actor, might have been a journeyman cabinet-maker. A good cabinet-maker who is not ashamed of his craft is a better man than a good actor who is ashamed of his calling.

> "Honour and shame from no conditions rise,
> Act well your part—there all the honour lies."

The elder Macready gave his children the breeding and education of gentlemen. By his industry and his influence he obtained for his eldest born an entry to the charmed circle of Covent Garden—made him the compeer of the Kembles, Charles Young, Miss O'Neil, and all the great actors of that age.

At a period of life when most of his former colleagues were condemned for years to the drudgery of the routine of country theatres, William Macready leaped at a bound into the midst of that dazzling and starry life. While yet a youth his picture was exhibited amongst the celebrities of the day in the Academy, and in his earliest manhood he became the

timate and bosom friend of the shining lights of
ıe age. Yet even then he was querulous and dis-
tisfied, and from the beginning to the end of his
ıreer he continued to carp and cavil at the calling
hich had actually dignified and ennobled him

Obviously it would have been the more honour-
ble course to have retired from the craft he detested,
ıd to have sought a livelihood in some more con-
enial vocation.

A man of so nice a sense of honour not only
ight, but ought to have said :

> "Despising
> For you [the drama], thus I turn my back ;
> There is a world elsewhere !"

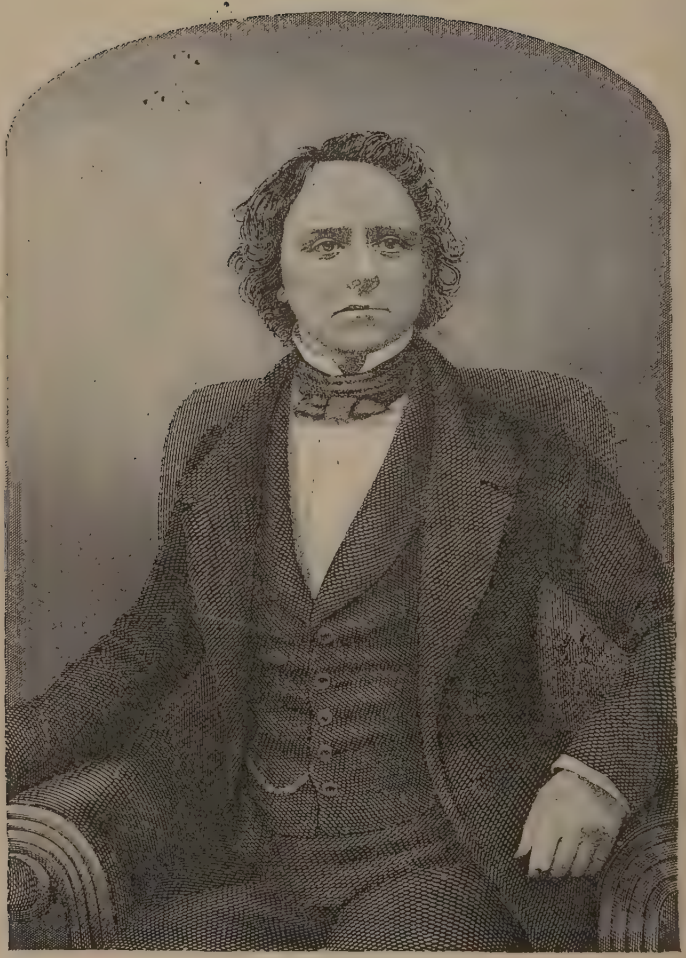
hen, even those who differed with his opinions
ould at least have respected his consistency.

Mr. Montague Stanley, the eminent Scotch actor,
ıving conscientious scruples as to the morality of
ıe actor's calling, retired from the stage and entered
ıe Church. Macready, though he scorned his craft,
d not scorn to earn what he deemed the wages of
n through the medium of the calling he despised.

I yield to no one, living or dead, in affectionate
eneration for this great actor ; but a sense of what
very man owes to his craft has prompted me to
cord this protest against the most painful diagnosis
a morbid mind which has ever gone forth to the
orld since the revolting "Confessions" of Jean
cques Rousseau.

If it be true that no man is a hero to his valet,
viously no man is a hero to himself. However

that may be, I prefer to turn away from the great actor's dyspeptic and distorted picture of himself to a portrait painted by other and more sympathetic hands. Lady Pollock's delightful little monograph, "Macready as I Knew Him," reminds me of the Macready that I knew, the Macready whose memory I must always revere.



CHARLES KEAN.

CHAPTER II.

THE KEANS.

Of really distinguished artists, the Keans (always excepting Charles Mathews and Mario) were the least bumptious and affected people in the world.

In society they were affable and approachable; and in the theatre, although strict disciplinarians, they were amiable and complaisant.

He would have been a bold man, though, who attempted a liberty with Charles Kean, for most surely the hand of iron would have been immediately felt through the glove of velvet.

When I first met these accomplished artists in my boyhood at the Belfast Theatre, it was not customary to travel, as is now the case, with an entire company; hence the labours of a troupe of country players, especially during the engagement of London celebrities, were absolutely Herculean.

Looking back on Kean's programme, even after all these years, its extent and variety amaze me. During the eight or nine nights of their engagement, they produced "Richard," "Hamlet," "Macbeth,"

"Othello," "Love," "Much Ado," "Money," "The Gamester," and "The Wonder"—the last two for their benefit.

Of course these works could never have been got through at all, save for the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Kean did not require to rehearse their own scenes —*i.e.*, scenes which were entirely confined to themselves—and had not the majority of the company been experienced and accomplished actors.

It was terrible drudgery, however, for everyone, from the stars downwards.

Our rehearsals commenced daily at ten, and lasted until four, and sometimes even later. By the time we got home to dinner, and had arranged our "properties," etc., it was almost time to get back again to commence the performance. It was a labour of love, however, to do whatever we could to help the Keans, not only because it was our duty, but because they made our duty delightful, by their grace and charm of manner.

I have met persons since, and in high places, too, who rarely or ever attended a rehearsal; or if they did, would keep an entire body of people waiting for an hour or two, and when at length they put in an appearance, they never deigned to offer an apology for their insolence.

Obviously, this sort of thing could only obtain through the supineness of managers, or the servility of actors, who by their sycophancy condoned this social indignity and artistic outrage.

The Keans were, however, the first on the stage

rehearsal, and the last to leave it. As for me, ith my fifteen or sixteen years, I didn't want to go ome—morning, noon, nor night. I never left the ings for a single moment. My delight was un- ounded, and my pleasure was enhanced by my onder, as I beheld each play take form and shape eneath the master-hand. Somehow or other, the rocess reminded me of the story in the "Arabian ights," where the imprisoned Genie emerges from e iron pot on the sea-shore, and dilates into the rm and proportions of a Colossus. It seemed to y inexperienced mind simply amazing that one ead could not only contain the flood of knowledge hich Kean poured forth on every subject connected ith the text, the costumes, and the "business," but at, at every interval occasioned by the setting of a ene, etc., he could unbend, and tell the funniest ories with the greatest zest.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Kean were capital *raconteurs*, nd we were eager and delighted listeners to their over- owing *répertoire* of original and amusing experiences.

Their regard for each other was beautiful to itness. He was profoundly attached to her, and e idolized him.

She used to say with the most perfect *naïveté*:

"When my Charlie was a boy, he was the ugliest d I ever met; but I could never see his ugly face r his beautiful eyes."

To which he responded:

"And I could *d*ever see yours, *D*elly, because of our beautiful *d*ose."

"And you could not see much of that, dear, for I was always falling down and breaking it, and coating it with scale armour."

That nasal organ must have had an Antean quality of recuperation, inasmuch as its contact with its mother earth had apparently not reduced its somewhat exuberant dimensions by the breadth of a hair.

Although approaching maturity, Mrs. Kean was a finely-preserved and magnificent woman of more than middle height.

Despite that very pronounced olfactory organ, her face was by no means destitute of feminine charm, and her figure was splendidly proportioned.

Certain natural advantages, in which she took a not altogether inexcusable pride, were very conspicuous in Rosalind, in Viola, and in Ion, in all of which parts she still presented a superb and statuesque appearance. A well-shaped head was covered with a profusion of light-brown hair; delicately-pencilled eyebrows surmounted large, beautiful hazel eyes; while her well-cut, ripe, ruddy lips set off to rare advantage two rows of dazzling white teeth; and, to crown all, her smile was sunshine, and her voice was music.

As to Kean's *personnel*, his face was merely redeemed from being positively ugly by the splendour of his eyes. His head was large, and covered with a thatch of very coarse straight black hair, which he wore very long. His brow was majestic and imposing. His mouth and chin were firm and well

ıt ; but his nose was of so irregular an order that I ally do not know how to describe it.

Although his figure scarcely approached the iddle height, it was so muscular, so symmetrical, ıd so admirably balanced, that one had no occasion wonder at his being captain of his crew at Eton. is neck was like a pillar of ivory, his chest was oad and expansive, his waist slender ; while his gs were more elegant than sturdy, with perhaps a ight suspicion of the parallelogram inherited from s father.

He moved with ease, grace, and distinction, and espite his plebeian features and his long hair, at all mes and in all places impressed one with the idea at he was a gentleman. I was particularly struck ith this distinguishing and all-pervading character- tic in his Evelyn. In parts of this character Kean ıcceeded despite of nature, for he had a kind of og-in-the-gutter voice, and usually spoke as if he ad a cold in the head ; besides which, he had two three vocal eccentricities, which he could never ırmount or even control. For instance, he could ot pronounce the consonants "m" and "n."

In the first scene with Jarvis in "The Gamester," e begins by inquiring, "Well, Jarvis, what says le world of me? I'll tell thee what it says. It lls me a false friend, a faithless husband, a cruel ther—in one short word, it calls me Ga/ester !"

In Shylock he was wont to say :

> "You take my life,
> When you do take the beans whereby I live."

But his most unfortunate slip occurred in the last line of "Money," when Evelyn says that in order to enjoy the good things of life, we require "plenty of money."

In this situation Kean always brought the curtain down with a roar, by grimly remarking that the one thing necessary to complete our happiness is "plenty of pu*tty*!"

Despite these drawbacks, he was so earnest and sympathetic, so graceful, so picturesque, and, above all, so gentlemanly, that he rarely or ever failed to hold his audience.

For myself, I was a youthful iconoclast, and I was more impressed by his delightful personality and his remarkable skill as a stage-manager than by his ability as an actor.

He opened in Cibber's adaptation of "Richard III.," the costumes, arms, and armour of which he travelled with, and very authentic and splendid they were. We had only one rehearsal of this play, and from ten in the morning until six at night he never left the stage, nor did we either.

Richard was said to be his "crack" part; but I had the audacity and the bad taste to think it a fine "penny plain and twopence coloured" performance. Yet how admirably he commenced it! Indeed, up to the end of the second act, he was natural and refined, elegant and insinuating. After that it was all scowl and shrug, start and strut, fret and fume. His mixture of shout and shriek, and exaggerated grimace and gesture, in the "Flourish trumpets!

Strike alarum drums!" speech reminded me more of Mr. Punch's "rooty too," than the tone of high command of the last of the Plantagenets. Yet, in the very same scene, his

"Off with his head! So much for Buckingham!"

was the perfection of stage trickery. Then he fought like a bull-dog and died like a Briton, and brought the curtain down with thunders of applause.

His Macbeth had splendid and picturesque moments, more especially in the last act.

During the performance of this play, a certain gentleman, who afterwards became a popular star at the Minors, enacted Seyton. Being "a fellow of infinite jest," he was occupied in telling funny stories in the green-room when he ought to have been on the stage in the fourth act.

There was a "dead stick," and Kean was furious. He prowled up and down the stage like a tiger, growling, "Where is the brute? Send him on, that I may kill him!"

After a prolonged delay, Mr. O. Seyton appeared.

"What's your Grace's will?" he inquired, in great trepidation.

"Saw you the weird sisters?" fiercely inquired Kean.

To which Seyton ought to reply, "No, my lord." But with a desire to make matters agreeable to the irate tragedian, he replied, "*Yes*, my lord!"

Quite taken off his balance, Kean gasped, "The d——l you did! Where are they, then?"

Utterly unmanned, the wretched Seyton replied, "I'll show your Majesty if you'll deign to step round the corner!"

Of course not another word of the scene could be heard; but when they made their exit, Kean let fly and anathematized Seyton.

That gentleman was, however, equal to the occasion.

"Although I admit that I am to blame," said he, "yet the fault was yours, sir."

"*B*ine, sir—*b*ine!"

"Yes, sir. I was standing at the wing looking at the scene, when you magnetized me, dazzled and blinded me by the effulgent light of your eyes."

"Bless my soul, you don't say so?"

"Yes, indeed, sir."

Kean, whose weak point was vanity, relaxed into a smile, as he replied:

"Well, don't do it again, dear boy, because you flummuxed me, and I can't bear to be flummuxed."

As for his Othello, the late Doctor Joy, Kean's manager, who had a vivid recollection of the elder Kean, assured me that he once saw Charles play the valiant Moor at Old Drury, and that he was equal to his father at his best.

Whatever Charles might have been on that occasion, the only time I ever saw him attempt the part he made a terrible mess of it.

He had just heard a bogus report of the alleged death of his intimate friend Murray, the Edinburgh manager, which somewhat unhinged him. He, however, got through his first scene without difficulty,

but when he came to the Address to the Senate, he had barely uttered the first line, "Most potent, grave, and reverend signors," when his memory left him altogether.

He inquired anxiously of me (I was the Cassio):

"What is it?"

In the innocence of my heart, I responded:

"What is what?"

"The word! The word!" he replied.

"Which word?" I ingenuously asked.

"Why, the word I want!"

"But," said I, "I don't know which word you *do* want!"

Mrs. Kean and the prompter both saw something was wrong, and they each tried to prompt him from the wings, but in vain. At last, a luminous idea occurred to me. I whispered him the last line of the Address; he accepted the suggestion, and boldly cutting out a hundred lines or more, "in one fell swoop," he exclaimed:

"Here comes the lady—let her witness it."

Whereupon the entrance of the gentle Desdemona got us out of our immediate difficulty.

Next day he talked over the matter complacently enough, and quoted the story of T. P. Cooke, who, after playing William in "Black-Eyed Susan" two or three thousand nights, broke down at last. In this emergency, one of the gods, who knew the play by heart, prompted the gallant tar. In publicly acknowledging the obligation, Cooke remarked:

"You see, messmates, a man's memory can't last for ever."

Kean went on to state that on his first appearance in town, as Young Norval, he stood trembling and irresolute at the wings, until Harry Wallack pushed him on the stage; and when he got there, he was so utterly confounded by the warmth of his reception that at first he could not articulate a single word.

He also cited another remarkable story of his sudden loss of memory.

The first time he ever played Claude Melnotte, he broke down in the description of the palace by the Lake of Como, and, ever after, he insisted on the prompter standing, prompt-book in hand, in the second entrance, to the right of the audience, keeping time with him, or rather preceding him, line by line. During an engagement in Liverpool, he acted "The Lady of Lyons" three or four times. For the first three representations, the prompter was at his post regularly, and all went smoothly; on the last night, however, he was unfortunately called away. Claude commenced his description as usual with the words:

> "Nay, dearest, nay,
> If thou wouldst have me paint the——"

At this moment he fixed his eye on the spot where the prompter should have been, but found him not.

The Prince of Como paused, and tried back, saying:

> "If thou wouldst have me paint—
> I say—if thou wouldst have me paint the——"

Then he collapsed utterly, exclaiming audibly to Mrs. Kean, who had in vain attempted to prompt him:

"It's *d*o use, *D*elly: I'm flummuxed!"

In the old times, country audiences were as familiar with the standard plays as the actors themselves; indeed, it is upon record that when, in his youth, Kean broke down in the last act of "Macbeth" at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the "King of the gallery" "gave him the word," in the euphonious dialect of the district, and that Charles readily accepted the help of his rough and ready prompter, bowing his grateful acknowledgment, an act of courtesy which quite enlisted the sympathies of the Tyneside folk with the young tragedian.

Years afterwards, when he played Wolsey in his magnificent revival of "Henry VIII." at the Princess's, he suffered more from nervousness than he had ever done, and it was alleged (though I cannot vouch for it from my own personal knowledge) that two young girls, who followed as pages in his train, were carefully taught the words of Wolsey, so that in the event of his breaking down they might prompt him.

His Hamlet, despite some old-fashioned trickery, said to be derived from his father, was a very fine performance, and even the tricks were done with an ease and elegance which disarmed criticism.

Absurd as it may appear in description, nothing more picturesque or striking could be imagined than his sliding down the stage to the footlights

in the Closet scene, and demanding of the Queen mother:

"Nay—I know not.
Is it the King?"

As for his fencing, that was, indeed,

"A very feather in the cap of youth!"

But his Huon? Oh, oh!

He had a frank egotism, and liked to talk about his acting. After "Love" was over, he asked me what I thought of his performance of the Serf.

With the modesty of youth, I told him "I thought it was not in the same century with James Anderson."

He replied:

"You are right, my boy—you are right; but wait till you see my Benedick."

I did see it, and oh! what an ebullient, delightful performance it was! So was Don Felix. His Evelyn was beyond compare (I never saw Macready in the part), the most charming rendition of the poor scholar I have ever witnessed; but his Beverley was his part of parts—while as for Mrs. Kean, though she excelled others in Beatrice and Violante, in Mrs. Beverley she excelled herself.

On the night this play was acted, the audience crowded the musicians out of the orchestra—then they encroached still further, and invaded the stage, and at last actually ascended into "the flies." Strange as it may appear, there seemed nothing incongruous in that awful last scene being acted in

the centre of a semicircle of eager and excited auditors in the garb of the nineteenth century.

In accordance with the usual "business" (said to have been invented by Mrs. Siddons), as Mrs. Kean was being led off the stage, she gave a piercing, heart-rending shriek, and precipitated herself on the body of her husband. Anson (so long at the Adelphi) was the prompter, and he dropped the curtain on the instant. When it fell, we gathered round Mrs. Kean, and raised her. She was in mad hysterics, and kept exclaiming:

"Oh! my Charley—my poor darling—you are not dead; say you are not dead!"

"Deuce a bit, my darling!" responded Kean.

"But tell me so—tell me so, Charley!"

"I *am* telling you so, *D*elly; but, there, there—come and get dressed for Violante."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Kean, immediately recovering herself. "It's wonderful I should have forgot about 'The Wonder!' Servant, ladies and gentlemen!"

And so, with a stately curtsy, she made her way to her dressing-room. Half an hour afterwards she was revelling in the humours of Violante, as if such a personage as Mrs. Beverley had never existed.

(I pause here to mention one of the actors on that occasion—Sydney Davis, our stage manager and leading man. Highly popular as he was in all the great provincial theatres, this gentleman never acted in London, and yet he was beyond all doubt one of

the most accomplished and versatile actors, and certainly the greatest "cormorant" in business, I have ever met. During this engagement he played Richmond, Macduff, Iago, The Ghost, Dogberry, Sir Frederick Blount, Lewson, and Colonel Briton. Subsequently, I saw him do Claude Melnotte, Hamlet, Risk in "Love Laughs at Locksmiths" (with the original music), Goldfinch ("Road to Ruin"), and Bagnollet ("Bohemians"), most admirably. His Sir Peter Teazle was the best after William Farren; while Damas, Polonius, Robert Macaire, Salamenes, and Chateau Renaud were as well acted as they have ever been acted within my recollection. To his accomplishments as an actor he added great facility as a writer, and considerable skill as a stage manager.)

To return to "The Gamester." Kean had a grievance against Macready in reference to this play. One evening, when he had spoken somewhat bitterly on the subject, I inquired whether there was a feud between him and the eminent one.

"Feud, sir, feud!" he replied. "Was there ever anything but feud between the *Bon*tagues and the Capulets? I made a great study of this part, played it repeatedly in the country. *D*owing that he *d*ever acted it, in the innocence of my heart I announced my intention of opening in it at the Haymarket. Would you believe it? the villain anticipated me by producing the play at Drury Lane, where, of course, it was a failure. How could it be otherwise with his Beverley? Well, sir, his object was to take the

wind out of my sails; so he set his *byrbidons* to work to slate the piece, stating that it was old-fashioned, bombastic rot, which even his genius couldn't galvanize into life; but we've galvanized it into life, haven't we, *D*elly ?"

Of course this sort of thing must be taken *cum grano*, but even if it were actually as Kean said, he could scarcely object to the *da capo* of his own composition, inasmuch as he was always anticipating Macready in the country, and laying his repertory of new pieces under contribution.

Hence, while "Sardanapalus," "Lady of Lyons," and "Money" were being acted in town, Kean got the pull of them in the country to such an extent, that, to the best of my belief, Macready never acted (certainly not in my time) any of these plays during his provincial engagements.

His stepmother, manageress of the Bath and Bristol Theatres, was a very eccentric and sibylline old lady. She would snarl and growl enough about the great "Mac" herself, but woe betide anyone else who dared to come "betwixt the wind and his nobility." By some sharp practice, Kean had procured a prompt-book of Macready's arrangement of "Sardanapalus," and had anticipated the "eminent" one's production of it in the country. Although Kean thought this a good joke, naturally Macready did not see it from that point of view, and he wrote a very hot letter to his stepmother, reproaching her for having permitted the play to be done in Bristol.

On the last night of his engagement, while settling up with the old lady (it did not run to acting managers in those days!), Kean blandly inquired, "Well, *B*rs. *B*acready, and what do you think *B*r. *B*acready will say when he hears of my doing 'Sardanapalus'?"

"What do I think Mr. Macready will say when he hears of *your* doing 'Sardanapalus'?" growled the infuriated Sibyl. "My good young man, I don't think Mr. Macready is even aware of your existence!"

It need scarcely be said that Kean hardly appreciated this compliment at the moment, though he laughed heartily enough when he told the story afterwards.

Although I have frequently heard him maintain that the name of his father was, at one time, a serious drawback to him, because it occasioned injurious comparisons, as he grew older and wiser he changed his mind on the subject.

Obviously, at the commencement of his career, he was overshadowed by his father's greatness, and, indeed, his ambition overmastered his discretion, when, in his noviciate, a raw unfledged boy, he had the temerity to challenge comparison with "the choice and master spirits of the age."

It is not generally known that he acted with his father upon one occasion, prior to that historic night when the great tragedian broke down, and finished his career at Covent Garden.

I am indebted to a rare and valuable little work,

now out of print, for a circumstantial account of this interesting event.

"An Old Stager" states:

"On the 22nd September, 1827, Edmund Kean was playing the part of Reuben Glenroy, in Morton's comedy of 'Town and Country,' at the Theatre Royal, Queen Street, Glasgow. At the end of the first act he went into the manager's room, which was always set apart for his use, where he found a friend waiting for him. This was old Edmund James, who had just arrived by the latest steamer from Bute, bringing with him a packet of letters, which had come from London by the last post, to his address at Bute Cottage.*

"Kean and his family were on terms of estrangement, owing to matters which I need not now go into; and he had recently heard it reported that his son Charles, then at Eton, had resolved to go on the stage. As such a step was much against his wish, he made up his mind not to believe it, and expressed the conviction that it was merely a rumour got up to annoy him. Still, he was rather anxious on the matter; and on this occasion he received the letters referred to with obvious interest. The very first he opened was from an old and intimate professional crony, Mr. Kenneth, the man who was the originator of the business of 'Theatrical Agencies' in the Metropolis. Enclosed in this letter was a copy of the programme for the opening of the winter

* In the Isle of Bute. Kean built the house for himself, and it is, I believe, in existence to this day.

season at Old Drury, on Monday, October 1st, 1827, which contained the startling announcement that, on this occasion, 'Mr. Charles Kean, son of the celebrated tragedian, Edmund Kean, would make his first appearance on any stage as 'Young Norval,' in Home's tragedy of 'Douglas; or, The Noble Shepherd.'

"Such was the effect produced by this intimation on Kean's sensitive and excitable disposition, that the letter and its enclosure fell from his hand to the floor, and he sank down on a sofa so overcome that he was quite incapable of appearing that night again, and the performances had to be changed.

"When he recovered, he sent for his secretary and confidential friend, Mr. John Lee.

"'John,' said Kean, 'you must get ready directly, and go up to town by the morning mail, and see Charles make his first appearance at the Lane. Get a front seat in the pit, and never take your eyes off him while he is on the stage. Watch every movement, look, and gesture—scan him well—and as soon as the performance is over, take the first conveyance you can find, and come back here and let me know the result. I shall take no other account of it but yours; and I shall sleep but little till you return. The mail goes at seven in the morning, so you had better go and secure your seat at once. You must write as soon as you get to London, and let me know the public opinion on this wild step. Have you arranged the bill for to-morrow? You had better keep it the same as it is—it will save trouble.

I shall be in waiting here at the arrival of the mail on Thursday; so don't fail to come with it, as every hour will seem a day to me till I see you. Take care, mind, that Charles doesn't know you are in London on my account; that would spoil all. He might think I was with you to see his first appearance. By the way, I'll send you up the bill here for that evening; give it to some one who will stick it up in the green-room at Drury. Charles will be sure to see it, and then he will know that I am not in the house.'

"With these instructions, and with the big tears rolling down his cheeks, Kean took hold of honest John's hand, and bade him farewell.

"On Lee's return, he handed Kean the morning and evening papers of the previous Tuesday, containing notices of the performance.

"'Was it a success, or a failure?' fiercely demanded Kean.

"'Neither,' replied the 'special' critic. 'It was well read, and he walked through it with plenty of confidence, and great self-composure. He didn't give way at all to extravagance, nor did he make any outrageous effort to gain applause.'

"'And he wasn't hissed?'

"'Oh no; far from it. The house was very kind and indulgent; and the appearance was far from being a failure. At the same time, it was no great success. He had evidently appeared prematurely, and without giving sufficient study to the part.'

"This statement of Mr. Lee had the effect of

taking a great load off Mr. Kean's mind, and he became quite cheery again.

"The following night was his benefit, which was a bumper; and his twelve nights' engagement at this time came to a conclusion.

"In the summer of the following year, 1828, Charles Kean came down to Queen Street on a starring engagement, his father at this time living in retirement at Bute Cottage, and ignorant of the fact that his son was in Glasgow. The young actor opened, as he had done at Drury Lane, in Norval; and curiosity to see him caused the house on the first night to be an excellent one.

"After the first night, however, the business rapidly declined, on which account Seymour, the manager, bethought him of a plan to give it a spurt on the last night, which he managed to carry out successfully.

"He wrote to Edmund Kean, and succeeded in engaging him to come to Glasgow and play for one night, but took care not to hint that it was for his son's benefit, and that they were to play together; and Kean never knew that such was the case until he came into the theatre and saw the bill.

"The old man got into a terrible passion upon making the discovery, and wanted to leave the house; but his friend, Jerry Cunningham, who was with him, urged him not to show spite against his own son, and persuaded him to go on.

"The play was Howard Payne's tragedy of 'Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin': Brutus by Mr.

Kean; Titus, his son, by Mr. Charles Kean. The house was one of the largest, if not the very largest, I ever saw in the glorious Old Royal. Upstairs and down the crush was the same; and so, when the audience portion of the house could positively hold no more, Seymour resolved to stow them away wherever there was a 'coign of vantage' behind, at a charge of three shillings each.

"By his order I was made 'first robber' for this department at the stage-door, where I took full forty pounds, which, at the rate mentioned per head, shows that two hundred and fifty persons were, on this memorable evening, accommodated behind the scenes.

"The word 'scenes' reminds me, by the way, that on this occasion there was no change of scene. There could not be, in fact, owing to the intrusion of so many of the public, and the piece was literally performed from beginning to end in a circle on the centre of the stage.

"Considering such disadvantages, the play was well gone through by all engaged.

"Kean's acting on this night was beyond praise. The Storm scene, in which he denounces Sextus, when the lightning strikes the statue of the latter's father from the horse, was as fine almost as anything in his great third act of 'Othello.'

"In the part of Titus, Charles Kean was quiet, perhaps, but intelligent, and occasionally effective—his reading of the part, generally, smacking a good deal of the paternal style.

"Except when on the stage together, father and

son never met or recognised one another previous to the fall of the curtain on 'Brutus.'

"Both were called for at the fall of the curtain, but Kean would not go on.

"After the tragedy, the bulk of the audience left, and those who had been behind the scenes were sent to the front, where there was now plenty of room for them to witness the after-piece, 'The Hunter of the Alps'—Felix by Mr. Charles Kean.

"While he was waiting at the wing to go on for this part, his father passed by, on his way to go out by the box-lobby, so as to avoid the crowd at the stage-door.

"Halting for a moment, the old man simply said he hoped to see him at Bute to-morrow—there would be a crust of bread and cheese for him there.

"Charles politely said, 'Thank you, father,' and so ended the interview.

"This was all that passed—and I have only to add that they did not meet at Bute, as, instead of going home, Kean went next day over to Belfast!

"Once again, and only once, Kean and his son met on the stage together.

"Several years had elapsed, and in the interim Charles had studied assiduously, and was much improved as an actor.

"He had been for a considerable period with W. H. Murray, at Edinburgh, a very good school; and he had also visited the United States.

"On his return from America, father and son were reconciled, the person who had been the chief

cause of the estrangement between the great actor and his family having been discarded.

"It was on the boards of Covent Garden Theatre that Edmund and Charles Kean appeared together for the second and last time, the play being 'Othello'—the Moor by Mr. Kean, Iago by his son.

"Their acting in the same tragedy was understood to imply that a reconciliation had taken place between them.

"This understanding on the part of the public was confirmed by the very cordial and affectionate manner in which Kean advanced towards his son when the latter came on the stage with him in the business of the scene.

"The elder Kean instantly cast off the character of Othello for that of a kind father.

"Bowing respectfully to the audience, he led Charles forward, and, as it were, introduced him to the house.

"When the applause had subsided, Kean stepped back to the part of the stage which he had quitted, seemed to grow to heroic proportions, and fixing his brilliant eyes on his son, appeared to electrify him into a consciousness of their relative positions in the scene, and instantly the Moor and his lieutenant once more stood before you.

"I have no recollection of him in the succeeding scenes, until that in which Cassio quarrels and fights. He then assumed a more than customary bearing of authority, matured execution, and impressive demeanour.

"He reminded me of a weather-beaten pilot, standing firmly at the helm, avoiding the breakers with an experienced eye, and giving a lesson to the youngster who was watching him, how to brave all similar dangers in his future career.

"There was something so paternally demonstrative in his whole manner, that it occurred to me for the first time that he was giving a final warning to his son, then on the stage with him, wishing him to understand, by his acting in that scene, that he was not to do as his father had previously done, but to do in future as he was then doing.

"At length came the great scene between Iago and Othello in the third act. All went well until the celebrated exclamation 'Villain!' etc., but on that word Kean's voice broke up into the falsetto.

"He paused a second or two, after which his head gradually fell on to his son's shoulder.

"'Get me off, Charles; I'm dying!' he gasped.

"Charles led him off the stage—and all was over. The rest is a matter of history."

For years after this sad event Charles Kean was hounded down and stigmatized as an impostor by the Grub Street gang, who, he alleged, detested a man who wore clean linen and lived like a gentleman. His firm impression was, that had he only hobnobbed and got drunk with these worthy fellows, as his father had done, they would have pronounced him a genius.

Charles, however, had his friends and partisans,

who fought his battles lustily. What the women of the period thought of the young tragedian may be found in the pages of Lady Lytton's somewhat florid novel, "Chevely; or, The Man of Honour."

After all, the name he bore was a name to conjure by, else he never could have been permitted the frequent opportunities afforded him for retrieving his repeated failures. That he did retrieve them may be attributed not only to his indomitable pluck and continued application, but to the fact that from the moment he left Eton, through good and evil fortune, he possessed social advantages beyond most of his compeers. From first to last, he was a celebrity, and although his personal advantages were not conspicuous, he was always a "ladies' darling." His popularity in that respect could not have arisen from his ability, for at first that was an undiscovered quantity; it certainly could not have been for his beauty, for in that respect he had nothing to commend him save a pair of weird, resplendent eyes, which I have heard ladies of mature years say exercised a magnetic power over the too susceptible fair ones.

Indeed, it was alleged and popularly believed that a distinguished personage, reputed to be one of the wealthiest women in the world, was desperately *en tête* with him, and followed him from pillar to post, seeking to throw herself and her fortune at his head. The temptations of this feminine Crœsus were, however, in vain, for Ellen Tree had already won his heart.

During his long banishment in the country he was a diligent student, working day and night to perfect himself in his art. While he was striving and starving he always kept a "stiff upper lip." No one but his mother ever knew of his privations, and at the lowest period of his fortunes he never lost touch of the fashionable world.

When the good times came, the hard rubs he had met with on the road only served to make merry with.

Mrs. Kean had as great a fund of anecdote as her husband, and, like him, was fond of recounting her youthful experiences.

In comparing notes as to our first impressions of a play, I happened to mention having when a child seen "As You Like It," at the Derby Theatre, with Rosalind acted by a beautiful being from London, with a beautiful pair of legs.

"And a majestic nose!" interposed Mrs. Kean merrily. "I was the 'beautiful being,' sir, with the beautiful—ahem! That night was my benefit, and I played Rosalind first, and Helen Creswell afterwards, in 'The Note-forger,' one of poor Fitzball's pieces, which, when first produced at Covent Garden, had a triumphant run of about eight or nine nights. Now, during my engagement at the Garden, I was entitled to a benefit, and as all kinds of difficulties were thrown in my way about pieces, I concluded to settle on 'As You Like It' and 'The Note-forger.' That despised melodrama, in conjunction with the

'beautiful being' whom you saw in Rosalind, attracted a house of between seven and eight hundred pounds."

In the course of conversation, I once ventured to ask her whom she thought the best tragedian of the day (present company always excepted). She replied:

"Miserable Jemmy Woulds, the low comedian of the Bath Theatre!"

Upon being pressed to explain, she alleged that, like Liston, Woulds was a disappointed tragedian, and that during the vacation at Bath, he used to take the Swansea Theatre, and avenge himself upon the Welsh public for the lack of appreciation on the part of the English public, by playing all the tragic parts.

"To be sure," said she, "he was the first tragedian I ever saw, and the first is always the best. Anyhow, I've never seen anyone play Shylock or Count de Valmont half so well as miserable Jemmy."

Despite the hard work they gave us, everybody was grieved to part with the Keans, and when we went down in a body to the quay to see them off to Scotland, they were moved to tears.

Although my parts were of minor importance, I had been very attentive, and they were kind enough to promise not to lose sight of me.

They kept their word, inasmuch as two or three years later, just before they went into management with the Keeleys at the Princess's, happening to

be acting at Portsmouth, they did me the honour to come over to Ryde to see me try my prentice hand on Hamlet, with the result that they offered me an engagement, which I indiscreetly declined.

I had, however, the pleasure of being present upon their opening night.

Strange to say, a play was selected ("The Twelfth Night") in which Kean did not act.

Mrs. Kean was the Viola; Mrs. Keeley, Maria; Keeley, Sir Andrew Aguecheek; Harley, Clown; Meadows, Malvolio; Addison, Sir Toby; Ryder, the Sea-Captain; and Belton, the Duke Orsino. It was a delightful performance, and a charming production, but distinguished by little of the magnificence which characterized later works.

The partnership with the Keeleys was of short duration, and, strange to say, I happened to be in the theatre the very night it terminated, and remember Keeley making an ambiguous speech on his retirement.

Although it was my misfortune not to be associated with the triumphs of the Keans at the Princess's, I had the good fortune to see most of them.

Prior to the advent of "The Corsican Brothers" in town, I had produced that remarkable drama in the country, with a fair share of success; but until I saw Kean's production, I never realized how much the author was indebted to the genius of the actor and the skill of the stage-manager.

I was confirmed in this opinion when I afterwards saw Fechter's production (it will be remembered that

he was the original actor of the Dei Franchis in Paris) under the management of the late Mr. Harris, which certainly did not compare favourably with Kean's.

The ghastly and marvellous effect of the apparition, the splendour and gaiety of the Bal Masqué at the Opera, and the spectral glades of Fontainebleau, are things never to be forgotten—and certainly have not been since eclipsed, not even by Mr. Irving's recent splendid and artistic production. As for the acting, when Kean came on in the last scene, and fixed his eyes on Wigan, it was the old story of the basilisk over again, and from that moment it was evident that Chateau Renaud was a doomed man.

"Faust and Marguerite" was one of the most perfect and delightful works the present generation has ever witnessed. It was easy for "the common cry of curs, who ever bark at Honour's heels," to decry Kean, as being a "poodle dog, Mephistopheles." This sort of sludge is easy to fling, but fortunately it does not stick.

Space will not permit me to dilate on Kean's succession of triumphs in new and old works during his management of the Princess's. I therefore briefly indicate "Love in a Maze," "The Lancers" ("Queen's Shilling"), "Pauline," "Courier of Lyons," "Macbeth," "King John," "Henry V." (both magnificent works), "Louis XI.," "Midsummer Night's Dream" (oh! golden vision of my youth!), "The Tempest," with its veritable enchanted isle, and "The Merchant of Venice." In this last work

he invented a piece of stage management amounting to absolute genius. It will be remembered that the second act of this play is (with all due respect to the Bard be it said) most clumsily and bunglingly divided into nine scenes. With unerring judgment Kean transposed two of these to the next act, and compressed the remainder into one—a magnificent scene truly, representing Shylock's house on the one side, Bassanio's on the other, with the Grand Canal and the Place of St. Mark in the background. This innovation marked an epoch in the annals of the stage, and has ever since been followed by everybody, notably by Mr. Calvert in his memorable production at Manchester, and by Mr. Irving in his equally memorable production at the Lyceum.

Of what Kean did for contemporaneous literature, his productions of "Anne Blake," "Strathmore," "The Templar," "First Printer," and other original dramas, bear ample testimony.

For novelty, beauty, authenticity and splendour, nothing, in my time at least, can compare with his "Sardanapalus" and "The Winter's Tale."

I was so struck with the originality and splendour of the former remarkable work, that when, immediately afterwards, I went into management at Sheffield, I inaugurated my campaign with a replica of it, and acted it for a month, a run at that time unheard of in a provincial theatre. "And thereby hangs a tale."

A few months ago, I had occasion to consult Mr. H. Fenton, the famous scenic artist during the

Phelps and Greenwood *régime* at Sadler's Wells, with reference to a proposed production of my adaptation "Pericles." To my astonishment, the veteran informed me that all the authorities for "Sardanapalus," or nearly all, were originated at Sadler's Wells, and transferred thence to the Princess's. This is how it befell.

When Phelps was about to produce "Pericles," it was resolved, for the sake of colour and variety, to transfer the *donnée* of a portion of the play to Assyria. Consequently, Mr. Fenton applied to Mr. Layard (whose book upon the discoveries at Nineveh had, at that time, created a great sensation) for assistance.

Mr. Layard alleged that he was unable to comply with Fenton's request, but that he would give him an introduction to a friend, who was an eminent authority on the subject. From this gentleman, Fenton obtained all the requisite information, and utilized it in Phelps' magnificent production of "Pericles," after which he handed over the sketches to Mr. Grieve, who availed himself of them for Kean's "Sardanapalus."

I did not see the first night of this play, but strange to say, I did see Mrs. Kean's last appearance in "Myrrha," and saw it with regret. She had now (1853) grown far too matronly for the young Greek Slave, and was well advised when she ceded the part, through alleged indisposition, to the beautiful Miss Murray (Mrs. Brandram).

Eighteen months elapsed before Mrs. Kean returned to the stage, and I esteem it one of my most delightful recollections that I was privileged to witness

her re-enter as Queen Katharine, on the first night of the splendid pageant of "Henry VIII."—surely one of the most admirably acted and magnificently mounted plays ever seen. Kean's acting of Wolsey was at that time not to be compared with the artistic, mellow, and perfect rendition which he gave of this character towards the end of his career; but Mrs. Kean's Katharine was one of her very finest performances. Upon the occasion of this production John Oxenford stated in the *Times:*

"We will run the risk of being charged with exaggeration, by declaring in most unequivocal terms that "Henry VIII.," as produced at the Princess's Theatre, is the most wonderful spectacle that has ever been seen on the London stage."

Yet this marvel of scenic splendour, archaic accuracy, sumptuous embellishment, and artistic genius was thought to have achieved a remarkable triumph when it attained a run of a hundred nights, with receipts at an average of £1,000 a week, more or less. Were such a revival to take place in these so-called degenerate days, it would run for three hundred nights to an average of £2,000 or £2,500 a week.

Superb as were the preceding productions, they all "paled their ineffectual fires" before "The Winter's Tale," which for splendour, colour, and variety was the most gorgeous and beautiful spectacle I have ever witnessed.

A *matinée* of this play happened to be given on the day of the public rejoicings at the end of the Crimean War, so I travelled from Manchester to

MRS. CHAS. KEAN (ELLEN TREE).

London and back, seeing the play by day and the illuminations by night.

The fireworks in the Park were certainly bright enough, but they were not half so bright as the eyes of Caroline Heath and Carlotta Leclercq (comeliest of Florizels, loveliest of Perditas); and nothing that I have seen since has eclipsed the classic grace and queenly majesty of Mrs. Kean's Hermione. Unless I am mistaken, a little fair-haired girl named Ellen Terry played Mamilius. (One seems to have heard the name once or twice since!)

Methinks I can even now hear Charles Kean exclaiming:

> "Is this *d*othing?
> Why, then the world and all that's in't is *d*othing;
> The covering sky is *d*othing; Bythynia *d*othing;
> My wife is *d*othing; and *d*othing have these *d*othings,
> If this be *d*othing!"

Despite his unfortunate vocal peculiarity and a violent cold under which he laboured, Kean struck fire from these lines. Yes, whatever his detractors may have said, he frequently struck flashes of lightning from the text.

There was stridulous and stentorian Jack Ryder as Polixenes; steady John Cooper as Antigonus; and stately Mrs. Ternan as Paulina.

The play opened with a magnificent banquet. The flower-crowned guests reclined on the Triclinia, while the attendant slaves fanned them or filled the golden goblets from overflowing amphoræ of ripe Falernian. There were music, life, light, beauty, and archaic splendour everywhere. The Pyrrhic

dance closed the scene in a Bacchic frenzy of delight.

Next came the trial of Hermione in the huge amphitheatre, built out to the very walls of the building, masses of people — around, above — stretching out everywhere, far as the eye could reach, in endless multitudes.

Midway in the rush of the play came the gorgeous realization of Flaxman's magnificent design of Night chased into darkness by the God of Day; and when the golden-haired, godlike Phœbus, with limbs of marvellous symmetry gleaming forth bare and beautiful, arose from the Orient in the Chariot of the Sun, driving before him his milk-white, golden-maned, brazen-hoofed coursers, I was breathless with the beauty of the sight, until the crack of his whip brought my heart into my mouth, for I verily believed he was going to leap amongst us—chariot, horses, and all!

Then came facetious Harley Autolycus, who brought us back to earth with a run.

There was the dance of shepherds, and the wonderful saturnalia at the feast of Dionysus, and lastly the marvellous statue of Hermione.

Talk about travelling to town! It was worth travelling to the North Pole merely to have these pleasures of memory to keep green in one's heart.

The last of these great works which I had the good fortune to see was "Henry V.," which equalled, if it did not excel, its predecessors in splendour and in accuracy. The lack of female interest in this

agnificent pageant is its weakest point, and it was happy inspiration on the part of Kean to substitute lio, the Muse of History, for the chorus, instead of ld Time with his scythe and glass.

Mrs. Kean's majestic presence and sonorous eclamation gave a wonderful fillip to the play.

During this noteworthy management Kean was etained by her Majesty the Queen and the Prince onsort to arrange a series of performances for the tate Theatre at Windsor Castle, and all the dis-nguished actors of the epoch were invited to assist. he emolument was small, but the honour was eat, so were the fatigue and inconvenience.

The remuneration was fixed at a certain scale.

If a theatre was closed for the night, the manage-ent received a lump sum according to the size of e theatre, out of which the manager paid each ember of the company double salary for the occa-on, which frequently left the wretched impresario t of pocket by the transaction.

If, on the other hand, a single member of a com-ny were required, he or she was paid at the lowing rate : £10 for leading lady or gentleman, 5 for seconds—such as principal old man, light and v comedian, heavy, etc.—and £3 for utility.

It will scarcely be credited that even Macready nself was paid at this rate when commanded to ay Brutus before the Court.

Upon one memorable occasion a certain company s ordered to give a performance at Windsor.

Having to pay their people two nights' salary for the one night's performance, the management, to improve the occasion, gave a *matinée*, alleging that the theatre would be closed that night in consequence of the Royal command, etc.

They were undoubtedly within the exercise of their right in paying their company seven nights' salary for the six nights and the *matinée*, but some of the company did not see matters from that point of view.

Foremost amongst the malcontents was the late "Jimmy Rogers," of facetious memory, who at that time received the munificent stipend of £4 a week!

Poor Jimmy! He was five-and-twenty years before his time. Had he been living now, he would be getting £60 or £80 at least.

To add to his mortification, one of the utilitarians of the company, on being called upon, the week previous, to act a small part to fill up a combination cast, had been paid £3 for his services. When Jimmy, therefore, received only thirteen and fourpence, he was riled beyond measure.

The play in which he acted was called (ominous title!) "Hush Money," but Jimmy would not be hushed.

Overcome by the honour of being permitted to display himself before so illustrious an audience, and possibly by something more potent, he resolved to present his liberal honorarium to the poor-box at Bow Street. Presenting himself the next morning, he opened fire thus:

"Please, your Worship, with your permission, I wish to offer a small contribution to the poor-box."

THE MAGISTRATE: "Very good of you, I'm sure, Mr. Rogers. Kindly hand it over to the clerk. The smallest contribution will be thankfully received. What's the amount?"

ROGERS: "Thirteen and fourpence, your Worship."

THE MAGISTRATE: "Dear me! That's a remarkable sum."

ROGERS: "Still more remarkable how I came by it. That Californian sum, your Worship, is the amount which I received for acting before her Most Gracious Majesty, the Prince Consort, and the rest of the Royal Family at Windsor last night. As I should not like to take too much advantage of her Majesty's munificence, kindly put it down as the joint contribution of her Majesty and her loyal subject, Jimmy Rogers."

This *mauvaise plaisanterie* cost poor Jimmy his engagement. On the following night on his appearance the pit rose at him. This sealed his fate; he was immediately dismissed, and went forthwith to America, where he was nearly starved out, and was glad to get back as soon as he could.

Unfortunately, this untoward event put an effectual stop at once and for ever to the State theatricals at Windsor.

When the Princess Royal was married to the noble gentleman whose untimely death the world is

now deploring, his Serene Highness wished to see some performances of the English drama.

To the intense mortification of the Keans, and to the astonishment of everybody else, the entire arrangements were relegated to my excellent good friend the late Mr. John Mitchell, of Old Bond Street (popularly known as "Mr. Silky"), a genial, charming old gentleman, but scarcely the man to be put over the head of Charles Kean.

There can be no doubt that Kean felt himself insulted and grievously wronged in this business. He had, at great loss of time, and considerable loss of money, devoted himself to the nod and beck of his august patrons.

The only tangible acknowledgment he ever got for his services was a diamond ring, which was lost immediately after the presentation, and a reward offered for its recovery.

A wicked wag of the period (Albert Smith, I think), referring to the well-known feud between Macready and Kean, alleged, with characteristic good taste, that the ring was found "sticking in Macready's gizzard"!

Poor Kean was destined to be still more deeply wounded in his most vulnerable part.

Seeing successful brewers, obscure foreign fiddlers, and popular painters knighted, he, too, fondly hoped that in requital of his services he would have had a handle added to his name—a delusion which this business put an end to at once and for ever.

Every manager in London, when called upon to

act at Windsor, had to close his own theatre, frequently at an enormous loss, since the payment of a night's salary to the actor represents but a fraction of the managerial outlay. I believe E. T. Smith was the only manager who had the pluck to demur to this arrangement; in fact, he refused point-blank to accede to it.

He, too, had a grievance.

He informed me that, on his first taking Drury Lane, he presented through the regular channel a respectful request for the Royal Box to be retained on the usual terms. He was informed by the official who represented the Court that his request could not be granted, because of the brief and uncertain tenure of his management.

After five years' probation, he made a second application, which was again refused; so when he was commanded to send Charles Mathews to the Castle he replied that, "if the Court wanted to see Mathews, they could come to Drury Lane."

It was said this answer excited the greatest indignation in high quarters. One thing is quite certain; neither her Majesty nor the Prince Consort ever darkened the doors of Drury Lane again.

To return to the performances at Her Majesty's; Mr. Mitchell requested Kean to assist in these performances, but he, very naturally, declined to serve where he had reigned.

In this emergency Phelps was appealed to. Although, under the circumstances, he could scarcely have refused, Kean's partisans and friends, especially

amongst the gentlemen of the Press, resented his rival's coming to the rescue; and when the perform ance took place, Phelps was treated with but scant courtesy. On the night when he appeared at Her Majesty's as Macbeth, Kean appeared as Hamlet at the Princess's, and a great popular demonstration took place in token of sympathy with him.

The pecuniary result of Kean's management was deplorable. He himself told me that he had lost nine of the best years of his life and a considerable sum of money. In one season alone fifty thousand pounds were expended on the *mise en scène* only.

In order to retrieve his losses, it became necessary to take a voyage round the world. Fortunately he coined money both in America and Australia; and he returned home in 1861, loaded with gold and golden opinions, only to find himself elbowed out of the theatre which he had rendered famous by the triumph of Fechter.

Kean was not, however, the man to be kept out, and he made his re-entry to town with E. T. Smith at Drury Lane, where he played to big houses. Three weeks later Fechter appeared as Hamlet, which created a fashionable craze, and Kean complained to me that his coachman could not make his way down Oxford Street in consequence of the concourse of equipages at the Princess's.

"Deuced hard," said Kean pettishly, "to be driven off my own ground by a frog-eating Frenchman!"

After their engagement at Drury Lane the Keans

MISS O'NEILL AS MRS. HALLER IN
"THE STRANGER."

migrated to the other end of town, with disastrous results.

They were to have been paid a certainty of fifty pounds a night, but, unfortunately, the entire receipts scarcely ever reached that amount. The managers, whose local expenses were considerable, evaded the fulfilment of the contract, and when Kean threatened legal proceedings, defied him, alleging that it would be a doubtful advertisement for the success of the forthcoming provincial tour, were it published in a court of law that on no single night of the engagement had the stars ever played to the current expenses.

Kean was strongly disposed to "go" for the astute *impresario;* but wiser counsels prevailed, and ultimately the matter dropped altogether.

Fortunately, the country engagements proved highly successful.

Being then "on the road" myself, I rarely or ever came in contact with the Keans; but an occurrence took place which induced me to pay them a visit at the earliest opportunity.

It so happened that, when a lad of nine or ten years of age, my father took me with him upon a flying visit to Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, and while the gentlemen were at their wine, after dinner, I found my way to the library, where I came across Barry Cornwall's (?) "Life of Edmund Kean," which I eagerly devoured. I have never seen the book from that day to this, but a passage to this effect

still dwells in my memory, viz.: "Kean now played at the Grub Street Theatre for the benefit of his sister, Phœbe Carey, who acted with him on that occasion, and has never since been heard of. What has become of Phœbe Carey?"

After an interval of five-and-twenty years I was, oddly enough, enabled to answer this question. While acting in Huddersfield for a few nights, my attention was attracted to an aged couple, who played the parts of the old man and old woman in my pieces. Despite their poverty-stricken appearance, there was no mistake about their being decent people. Although past the time for acting, they were so obliging and attentive that I became interested in them.

Upon making inquiry, I found the old lady was the long-lost sister of Edmund Kean, and the gentleman her husband. Mr. Cuthbert had been a surgeon in the navy. He had, as all sailors and soldiers have, dramatic proclivities—had encountered the fair and fat Phœbe (for she had been a monstrous fine woman) at some amateur performance, with the result that Miss Carey became Mrs. Cuthbert, and quitted the profession. After some years of retirement came reverses of fortune, which involved the necessity of returning to the stage to earn a livelihood; and a very miserable livelihood it was. Under the most favourable circumstances they realized fifty shillings a week, that is, when they were in an engagement, which was not always. They had an only son, who was a Government schoolmaster in the

wolds of Yorkshire, at a miserable stipend of fifty or sixty pounds a year, and who was, therefore, quite powerless to aid them.

The season in Huddersfield was approaching a termination, and in a short time they would be left stranded and destitute.

Upon inquiring whether they had made known their condition to Kean, they told me that they had written some years before, but their letters had remained unanswered. Knowing that hundreds of letters addressed to managers find their way into the waste-paper basket, I resolved to tackle Kean on their behalf.

I was due at the Theatre Royal, Hull, the next week; but that noble building (it was one of the finest in the kingdom) happened to be destroyed by fire, and, as they say in the argot of the theatre, I was "resting because I had nothing to do."

The Keans were acting that week in Sheffield. I ran over to see them, and found them acting "The Wife's Secret."

They had aged perceptibly; but he preserved his figure, and looked singularly soldier-like and manly as Sir Walter Amyott. Mrs. Kean had, however, become very matronly and unromantic.

We stayed at the same hotel, and I dined with them the next day.

An unusually sumptuous repast was ordered, which he merrily contrasted with certain former Barmecide banquets in the same locality.

Five-and-twenty years before, when staying at the

very same hotel, the houses were so bad, that in order to enable him to make his usual weekly remittance to his mother, he pretended to go out to dinner daily, when, in point of fact, he dined with "Duke Humphrey;" and this was how he did it. He took his fishing-rod, and wandered about the banks of the river till it was time to go to the theatre, making believe to fish, and staying the cravings of an empty and voracious stomach with a crust of bread and cheese smuggled from the preceding night's supper.

We were as jolly as possible till we got to the story of Phœbe Carey, when he became very angry. It was a sore subject with him. He had always stood by his mother during the differences which had occurred between her and her erratic husband and his family, and the very name of Carey was a *bête noire* to him. He repudiated the relationship altogether, alleging that both the old lady and her husband were impostors.

Of course I believed his version of the story, and I wrote Mr. Cuthbert stating that Kean repudiated the relationship.

By return of post I received a quiet, dignified reply from the old gentleman, saying he expected no other answer; "but for all that," said he, "my wife is Edmund Kean's sister."

Twelve months or more elapsed, and I had forgotten all about the matter, when, during a short engagement at Stamford, my brother came to me and said:

"There is a show in the fair, and those poor Cuthberts are acting there."

It was a terrible winter, and the snow lay deep upon the ground. It appeared simply awful to contemplate the idea of these unfortunates being exposed to the inclemency of the weather at their time of life.

Without hesitation, I went down to the fair, found and interviewed them. Poor souls! they had drifted down to the lowest ebb.

Upon inquiring whether they had any documentary evidence to prove their identity, the old gentleman replied:

"No, sir; but, remarkable to relate, we have met here, in this very town, Mr. Perkins, a brother-officer of mine. He is now in the Excise. He knew my wife before our marriage; he saw her act with her brother Edmund at Grub Street; and, furthermore, he actually gave her away at our wedding at Loughborough ever so many years ago."

"Send him to me immediately," I said.

Next day Mr. Perkins called on me, and made a statutory declaration corroborating Mr. Cuthbert's statement in every particular.

I then brought the matter again before Kean, who refused to believe in the *bona-fides* of the Excise officer, alleging that it was a conspiracy between him and the Cuthberts.

Upon this, I felt it incumbent on me to write to the principal London journals, calling attention to the terrible condition in which these poor people

were placed. By some occult influence the letters were suppressed—anyhow, they never appeared.

Ultimately I succeeded in inducing the late Benjamin Webster, Chatterton, E. T. Smith and others, to place the aged couple in the Dramatic College, where they "made a good end on't."

But even there the existence of Phœbe Carey was suppressed. It never appeared in the list of candidates, and very few persons are aware to this day that the venerable Mrs. Cuthbert was the long-lost sister of Edmund Kean.

I regret to say that my action in this matter caused an estrangement between Mr. Kean and myself of some years' duration.

In the February following I saw him at Drury Lane, where he played another engagement with such dubious success, that, upon the death of Mrs. Kean's sister, Maria—a famous vocalist in her time, celebrated for being the original singer of the yet more famous "Home, Sweet Home"—they terminated the engagements at a moment's notice.

I was present also in the following month of March, when Kean reached the crowning glory of his life.

A presentation was made to him at St. James's Hall by his old schoolfellows from Eton. The Duke of Newcastle—one of his schoolmates—was to have presided, but being indisposed, his place was taken by Mr. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

It was an occasion and a scene never to be forgotten.

A few months later, the Fechter fever was over, and Augustus Harris the elder (I think I may venture to say principally at my instigation) entered into an arrangement with the Keans, who returned to their old hunting-ground with flying colours, and were received with acclamations by crowded and delighted audiences.

This success followed them to the country, where their engagements were a continued succession of triumphs.

During the period of our estrangement, I had drifted into management, and though I made repeated advances to Kean to act in my theatres, my proposals were invariably "declined with thanks."

At length, however, through the good offices of a mutual friend, Kean consented to bury the hatchet, and came to play his farewell engagement at my new theatres in Hull and York. Unfortunately he was then suffering from the encroachments of an insidious malady (Bright's disease), and his powers were failing fast.

I got up "The Merchant of Venice" for him to open in, and may be pardoned for saying that (although we did the piece for only one night), in order to do honour to the occasion, I expended more money on the one scene of the second act than our entire receipts amounted to.

I saw him just before he went on. He was very

ill, and I had a presentiment that his malady was mortal.

Except while engaged in superintending the setting of the scenes during the intervals of the acts, I saw the whole of this performance from the back of the pit.

When he came on the stage the impression to me was awful; he seemed to me to be acting under the shadow of death. Although his voice was feeble, his eyes still retained their old powers of fascination; and when they cast their scorching beams upon Antonio in the Trial scene, I was reminded of the fable of the snake and the bird. It really seemed as if the wretched Merchant must fall death-stricken beneath the gaze of the remorseless Shylock, or ere the bloody penalty could be exacted.

The great scene with Tubal was beyond his strength, but the Trial scene was, to my thinking, as powerful as ever.

Although Mrs. Kean was past the time for Portia, she still acted the part most admirably.

I never remember to have been so profoundly impressed with the evanescent character of an actor's popularity, or the fickleness and ingratitude of the swinish multitude, as upon this occasion. From the rise to the fall of the curtain, neither Portia nor Shylock received the slightest recognition from the blockheads in front.

Indeed, the only things which struck fire during the entire performance were the stale buffooneries of Launcelot Gobbo, in the second act (which abso-

CHARLES KEAN AS RICHARD III.

lutely elicited a call for the low comedian in the middle of the scene!), and the masked dance in the Carnival, which terminated the scene.

At the end of the play, thinking, perhaps, I might galvanize the bucolic pit into some feeling of respectful recognition for these two great artists, I tried to start a "call," but the attempt was howled down, and the curtain fell in solemn silence.

Nor was this all: as if to mark their lack of appreciation and their standard of taste, the farce which followed was received with roars of applause from beginning to end.

Kean was profoundly depressed by this apathetic and almost hostile reception, and talked about relinquishing his engagement there and then; but I persuaded him to give the Tykes another trial.

Happily the next night brought a crowded, an appreciative, and even enthusiastic audience to "Louis XI.," which he acted with all his wonted fervour and skill.

Of all his parts, this was the one in which he stood out from his compeers. Fechter, who was by no means a general admirer of Kean's, told me that in Louis he was far away beyond Ligier, who originally created the part.

Apropos, Fechter used to tell a story with great glee in connection with this subject.

He alleged that Kean and Webster both went to Paris to see Ligier in "Louis." Each took Fechter into his confidence, alleging that it was his intention to play the part.

Night after night they sat in opposite boxes. When the curtain was up, they never took their eyes off Ligier; when it was down, they never took their eyes off each other. They glared and glared, each offering up a devout prayer (so Fechter was wont to allege!) that the other might be drowned on the homeward voyage, so that the survivor might be left in undisputed possession of "Louis" for the English market.

It is quite certain Webster would have played the part remarkably well, but Kean took the wind out of his sails by being first in the field, and Master Benjamin was too old a soldier to play second fiddle.

During the engagement in Hull, Mrs. Kean, with more self-abnegation than is usual among distinguished people, played the little part of the Dame in this play to strengthen the cast and make Kean's labour lighter.

At the termination of his career he was as thoughtful and as considerate to his brother-artists as he had been at the commencement of it.

Though no longer able to attend rehearsal himself, his plays were adequately and, indeed, admirably rehearsed by two experienced and accomplished actors, Mr. J. F Cathcart and Mr. George Everett.

On the last day of his engagement we dined together, and at night I went to the theatre to see "Henry VIII."

"Nothing in her life became 'Mrs. Kean' like the leaving it" in Katharine of Arragon.

As for him—I never saw him act so well before. "His ashes lived in their wonted fires"—indeed, his performance was far away in advance of that which I had seen him give fifteen years before, surrounded by all the pomp and splendour of the Princess's.

Truly he made "a swan-like end, fading in music." When he spoke the "farewell," there was not a dry eye among the actors.

Alas! that "farewell" was prophetic.

Less than a month afterwards Charles Kean died, literally "with harness on his back."

Although she survived her husband for some years, at his death Mrs. Kean's public life was over. She still, however, took an active interest in the theatre, and when I made my *début* in town, she not only permitted me to have access for reference to the magnificent series of drawings which she had preserved of the Princess's production of "Henry V.," but she did me the honour to come repeatedly to see mine.

I was also indebted to her niece, Miss Chapman, who was a member of my company, for much valuable advice and assistance in the arrangement of colours and costumes.

Mrs. Kean faded out of life, even as she had faded from the public gaze, and she followed her gifted husband into the great silence unnoted, and almost forgotten.

To the rising generation their peaceful triumphs

are little more than a name; to others, however, they represent picturesque and splendid memories, a few of which I have endeavoured to preserve from the oblivion which ultimately engulfs all that pertains to the most perishable but delightful of the arts.

These crude recollections are consecrated to the memory of an amiable and accomplished couple, whose conduct and character shed a lustre on the art they loved.

CHAPTER III.

*PHELPS.**

On Monday, May 27, 1844, the memorable Phelps and Warner management commenced with "Macbeth," and that morning two boys waited upon the tragedian at the stage-door of Sadler's Wells, beseeching an engagement to bring them on the stage.

One of the boys was the late Charles Calvert, the other was myself.

Phelps appeared, at that time, a fair young man of thirty, though I know now he was considerably older. He had a profusion of light brown hair worn after the fashion of Macready, in huge bunches (yclept by the irreverent "Newgate knockers") over his ears. His eyes, at all times a serious drawback to his facial expression, were so pale as to be almost colourless, and were certainly almost indistinguishable on the stage. His nose, like Macready's, was of a strange composite order, the mouth and chin firm and wellcut, brow square, and well balanced, face oval, figure a little over middle height, slender

* Abridged from the Author's "Life of Phelps."

rather than sturdy, voice deep and resonant. Whether by accident or design I cannot say, but he certainly was always tinged with the Macready manner.

He was very gracious to us, and advised us both to go back to school. I don't know whether my companion followed his advice: I only know I did not.

When next I saw him it was at the farewell banquet given to Macready.

After that time I saw him in everything he did at the Wells, except "Love's Labour's Lost" and "Pericles," the last of which he told me was his greatest success. We had frequently been in communication with each other; indeed, he had repeatedly offered me engagements to act at Sadler's Wells, but my star was then in the ascendant in the great provincial towns, and, for reasons before stated, I never had the good fortune to serve under his banner.

He was married at an early age, and he spoke of his marriage as being an unmixed blessing.

He was always a home-bird—too much so, for he rarely went into society. It was easy to see the weight of Mrs. Phelps' influence over him—he was guided by her every wish, her every whim. After they were settled in town, and once had a home, she was never separated from him a single day. She accompanied him to the theatre nightly, and never suffered anyone to assist in dressing him except herself.

Although there was no lack of filial reverence, all

the family seemed to regard him as the spoiled child of the house. At home nearly every trace of the tragedian disappeared. Although naturally petulant and irascible, at his own fireside he was a jovial, genial boon companion, never weary of recounting his youthful struggles and misadventures.

The family, when I first became acquainted with it, consisted of father and mother, three sons and three daughters. The eldest son, Robert William, was a barrister, and had just received the Government appointment of Chief Justice at Saint Helena, for which he was about to set sail in a few days. Alas! poor fellow, he never returned. He died of typhoid fever, leaving a widow and three children.

Mrs. Samuel Phelps long predeceased her husband and his second son, poor Ned, a handsome but erratic youth, well known in the provinces, at Sadler's Wells and Drury Lane as a promising juvenile actor, but chiefly to be remembered for his performance of Faust to his father's Mephistopheles at Old Drury, was taken next, leaving behind him two or three children and a young widow, best known by her maiden and professional name as the sprightly and accomplished Miss Hudspeth.

Sarah, the second daughter, a charming and engaging woman, who was married to a wealthy manufacturer of Preston, died two or three years after her brother Edmund.

Although Mr. Phelps' declining years were solaced by the devotion of two of the best of daughters, who for his sake remained single, it can scarcely be

doubted that these cruel bereavements left an aching void in that affectionate heart which time could never heal.

My business relations with him commenced during my management of the York Circuit, where he came to fulfil a series of engagements.

Upon these occasions he was invariably my guest, and one summer he went over with his daughters, the late Mr. Tom Taylor and myself to the Isle of Man, where he made holiday with us for some three months.

It was principally during this period, and during my frequent visits to Camden Road (to which he removed on the death of Mrs. Phelps), that he related the various reminiscences hereafter recorded.

On the subject of his early life he was very reticent, merely stating that he was born in 1804, at Plymouth Dock, as Devonport was then called.

His father was a prosperous wine-merchant, whose sons received their education at Doctor Reed's classical school at Saltash.

One of the boys devoted himself to commercial pursuits, another graduated at Cambridge, took holy orders, and distinguished himself as a mathematician and as the author of a standard work on optics.

This gentleman, the Reverend Robert Phelps, D.D., was, and, I believe, is still, master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.

Samuel Phelps was apprenticed to a printer at Plymouth. Having duly served his indentures, he came to London to seek his fortune.

As a boy "Sam" was a member of an amateur corps at Devonport. Apropos of which, during the time he was with me at the Queen's, one morning, when he came to my office to speak with me on some subject, a crusty old man from the theatrical draper's was waiting for orders.

When the tragedian left the room the old fellow growled, "Humph! you don't know me now, Mr. Sam; of course not—'tain't likely; but fifty years ago we was brother hamatoors, we was, and acted together at Plymouth Dock, and now you are the heminent tragedian, and me in the alarming sacrifice business. For all that, I've acted Mercootio to your Romeo, and very well I done it too. Ah! it's a rum world."

Upon arriving in town, young Phelps speedily obtained employment as reader and compositor in the office of a London journal on which Douglas Jerrold was engaged.

Both the lads were of an aspiring turn of mind—both wanted to be actors, both took lessons out of their work hours, in Latin and mathematics, from a clever but eccentric old Dutchman. Later, each went in a different direction—the one to become a great author, the other to become a great actor.

Phelps made his first appearance in London as an amateur in one of the private theatres, as Earl Osmond in Monk Lewis's wild and extravagant drama of "The Castle Spectre." It may appear strange that the future apostle of the legitimate should have selected this "high-falutin," double-

breasted, old crusted specimen of "force shall effect what love denies" ruffian for his opening, especially when it is remembered that John Kemble, when the play was originally produced by Sheridan, declined the part, and elected, out of compliment, it is said, to the house of Northumberland, to play the milksop Percy, instead.

Phelps described his *début* and much of his subsequent career in something like the following words:

"I had dabbled a little in amateur theatricals down at Devonport, but that didn't count for much. When I became really stage-struck, I made my first amateur appearance under the name of Philips, as Earl Osmond in 'The Castle Spectre' (then a very popular play amongst amateurs), at the Rawston Street Theatre, Clerkenwell, where I paid five guineas for the privilege of making a fool of myself. Douglas Jerrold, who was foreman in the office where I was reader, belonged to a theatrical family, and affected to be an authority on all matters pertaining to the drama. I asked him to come and see my *début*. As he was a born critic, and loved to use the knife, he accepted the invitation with alacrity, and held a *post-mortem* examination on the play and the players.

"Next day he maintained an ominous silence. When we were going out for dinner, as we walked down Lombard Street, I asked him what he thought of Osmond.

"'Think of him?' he replied. 'I think he's a

burglarious, ruffianly, murderous beast, who deserves to be hanged without benefit of judge or jury.'

"'If it comes to that,' said I, 'so do Richard and Macbeth.'

"'Bah!' roared he. 'They're made of gold—that idiot is made of lead and putty.'

"'Anyhow,' I inquired, growing desperate, 'what did you think of me?'

"'H'm!' said he. 'You worked very hard, and, I suppose, must have sweat a good deal. In fact, I really thought by the time you had finished the play that your "solid flesh" (not that you have any to spare)

"'"Would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew."'

"'You're very clever,' I replied; 'but if you've nothing smarter than that to say, we needn't prolong the conversation.'

"With that I turned away.

"'One moment,' said he sharply. 'Have you really made up your mind to chuck up the shop and go on this wild-goose chase?'

"'I have,' I replied.

"'Very well,' he continued; 'don't say afterwards I didn't warn you.'

"'Warn me!' I exclaimed. 'Do you mean to say that I shall never make an actor?'

"'No. I don't mean to say anything of the kind. You *will* make an actor—but,' snarled the little viper, 'you'll make an infernally bad one! When you've

learnt to move like a man and speak like a Christian, and got rid of your damnable Devonian dialect, when you've had ten years' practice—if you're not starved to death in the interval—you'll succeed, if you've luck, in getting thirty bob a week in some second-rate country theatre. And now, go to the d——l your own way! Good-morning!'

"And off he went in one direction, I in the other.

"This was not particularly reassuring, but after I'd had another shy with another set of amateurs in Catherine Street (to which, by-the-bye, I did not invite Jerrold!), I arrived at the conclusion that I was an actor ready made.

"Having succeeded in getting an engagement at eighteen shillings a week at the West London Theatre (now the Prince of Wales's), in Tottenham Street, then under the management of old Beverly, I thought my fortune was made, and threw up the shop at once. I opened in Desmoulins, in 'The Prisoners of Lyons,' and, I may say, shut in it, inasmuch as at the end of the first week I was informed that my valuable services were no longer required—from which you will doubtless infer that I did not set the Thames afire by my performance of the gallant Captain of Gendarmerie.

"After this I loafed about for some time, trying to procure an engagement; but it was a deuced difficult thing to get on the stage in those days, I assure you.

"Fortunately I had saved a few pounds, or I don't know what would have become of me.

"At length, one morning my heart was gladdened with the news that a fellow whom I had met at the West London had the offer of an engagement with Huggins and Clark, at Pontefract, for juvenile business, at a guinea a week. As he couldn't go himself, he transferred the engagement to me. It was to commence as soon as I could reach my destination.

"The journey was a twister, but I didn't think of that—nor did I pause to reflect that I didn't know one of the parts, and that I hadn't a single property. No! I accepted the engagement there and then.

"When I got to Pontefract I found myself announced for Captain Galliard, in 'X. Y. Z.,' for Joseph Surface and Orlando, two of the longest parts on the stage—moreover, two parts in two plays I had never even seen, and of which I did not know a single line.

"Having only one rough and tumble rush through both pieces with people who, knowing the plays and the 'business' by heart, gabbled through their parts like parrots, I didn't reap much benefit from the rehearsal.

"Having no properties, I looked an awful guy. Of course I made a most heavenly mull of both parts, and as the inevitable consequence, immediately got the sack. My sentence was, however, commuted from capital punishment to penal servitude.

"Huggins said, whatever I might do hereafter, at present, I was utterly disqualified for the line of

business for which I had engaged—and a sense of truth compels me to admit that he was right. It was a very different thing, studying one part in three months among amateurs, to playing two new parts a night among actors.

"Clarke proposed that I should remain for 'utility,' at a slightly reduced salary. 'Half a loaf is better than no bread.' I jumped at the proposition, and remained for a considerable period in this little company, visiting a lot of small towns in Yorkshire, enacting anything I could get, and acquiring some crude knowledge of the rudiments of the art.

"It was during this engagement, while receiving the munificent stipend of eighteen shillings a week, that I took to myself a wife. It was a love-match—we were boy and girl—but that is not a thing to be talked about.

"Soon after our marriage, the company was disbanded, and I had to look out for another engagement; but as it was summer-time, and as there was no likelihood of my getting a berth till the autumn, I made up my mind to return to town. For all the good it did me, I might as well have remained in Yorkshire. I danced attendance daily upon the agents, on Kenneth, in Bow Street, on Sims, at the Harp, opposite to the Pit of Drury Lane; but although I turned up punctually, day after day, nothing turned up for me. These continual disappointments made me dreadfully crestfallen and disheartened, and I began to fear that Jerrold was right, after all. My poor lass begged and prayed of

me to go back to the office. I think I should have done so, but I couldn't endure the prospect of encountering the little beggar's viperous tongue. Apropos of him, he struck out a new path, and after some bitter struggles, found himself famous as the author of 'Black-Eye'd Susan,' and other popular dramas.

"Heart-breaking as was the prospect, there appeared nothing for it but to go back to the reading-room, and abandon my ambitious aspirations. I had almost made up my mind to do so, when one day, while hanging about the Harp, I came across a fellow of the name of Hay, who afterwards became a famous comedian at Exeter and Plymouth. Over a glass of beer he told me that he was then on his way to an engagement at Brighton. The day before he had left Abbott's Company in Lincolnshire. They were located at Gainsborough, and he was quite sure that they wanted a sharp young fellow like myself.

"'Cut this game,' said he; 'you'll never get an engagement here to the day of judgment—make the best of your way to Gainsborough. Stay. I'll give you a line.' And he wrote me an introduction to the manager, there and then. 'Now, hook it at once, and if you can't manage the coach fare, get on to the great North Road, pad the hoof for twenty or thirty miles, till the mail overtakes you, and ten to one they'll give you a lift the rest of the way for a few shillings. Good-bye, and good luck to you.'

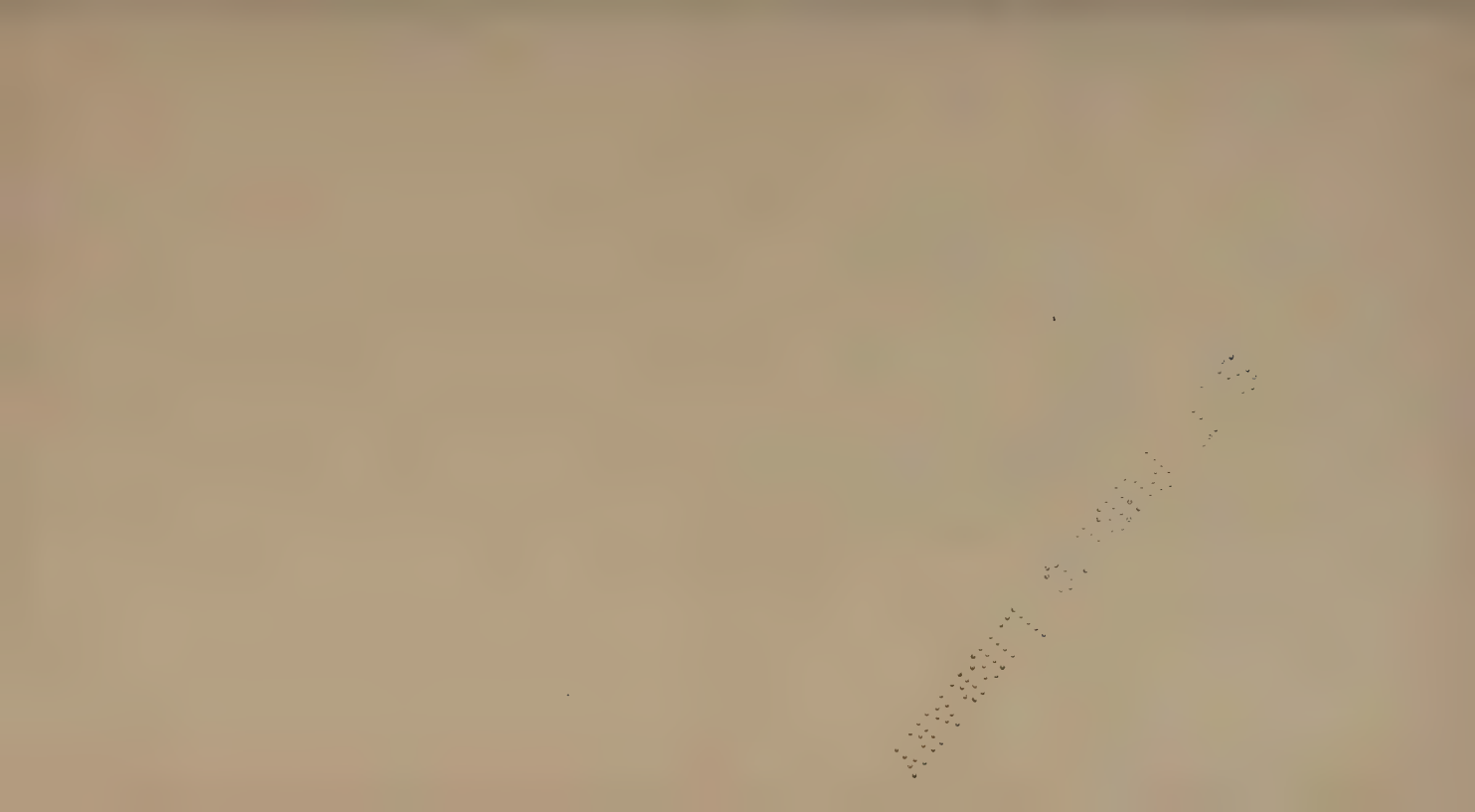
"When I got home, of course *she* wouldn't hear

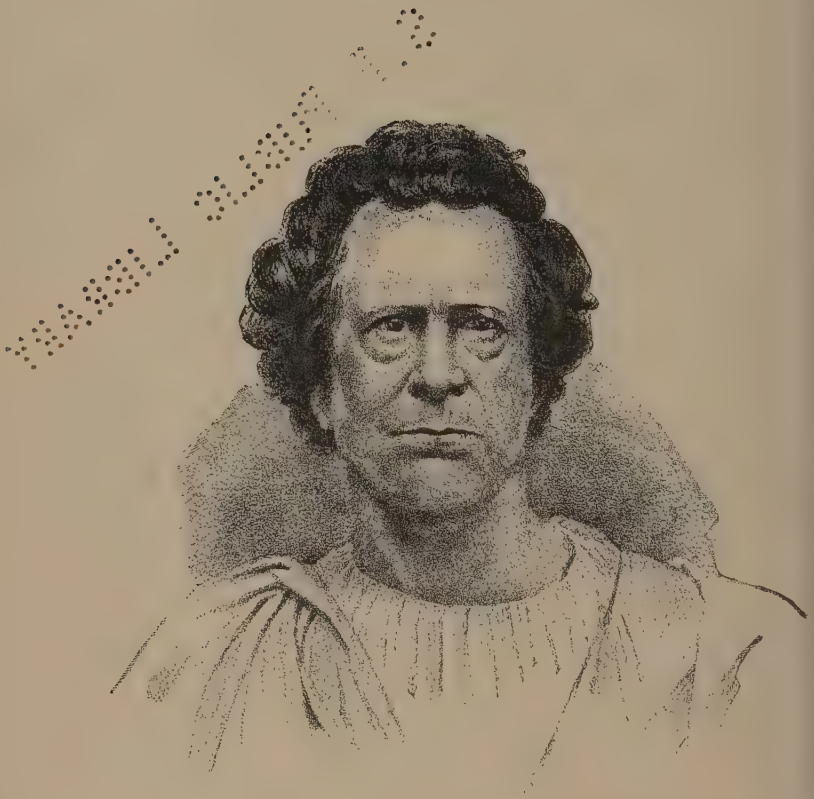
of my proposed journey. We had never been parted since our marriage, and she was convinced I should be robbed and murdered on the highway. I soothed her down, and pointed out what a desirable opening it would be. Of course we couldn't doubt that I should be immediately snapped up by the manager —that I should take the provincial public by storm, etc. She was even more convinced than I was that I had only to be seen to be appreciated; so at length she yielded to my arguments, and it was settled that I was to start on Monday morning.

"It was then Thursday, and the first thing was to hold a consultation over our finances, which were very low indeed. I couldn't take an engagement without my 'props,' and I had to ascertain how few I could do with, and how much, or rather how little, I had to pay for them. In this emergency, I bethought me of my new acquaintance, and returned to the Harp, to consult him.

"As luck would have it, he had been playing the interesting heroes, and was now going into the low comedy. He sold me a handful of valuable things, including a ringlet wig, for which he had no further use, for a crown. Then he accompanied me to Vinegar Yard, where we picked up a pair of russet boots, a pair of sandals, a pair of fleshings, a pair of worsted tights, an old sword, and a few other odds and ends, for thirty shillings.

"Bidding my kind friend once more 'Good-bye,' I trotted home with my purchases, as proud as a dog with two tails.





SAMUEL PHELPS AS BRUTUS.

"The time 'twixt Thursday night and Monday morning was passed in alternate fits of hope and despondency, with intervals of experiments in making lace collars, cuffs, and ruffles, ballet shirts, and other little nicknacks.

"When we came to cast up accounts, at the last moment, we found we had barely two pounds left. Of course, *she* wanted me to take it all, but on this point I was inflexible. I took ten shillings, and left her the rest, and so, having previously arranged that I would send for her as soon as I got to Gainsborough, with aching hearts and tearful eyes, we parted on that memorable winter morning.

"It was a sharp frost, and bitterly cold.

"There was one comfort, I was well wrapped up; in fact, she tied the muffler round my neck which she had herself knitted for the occasion. I stuck my sword (which was covered with brown paper, for decency's sake) through the handle of my carpet-bag, slung it over my shoulder, and away I trudged in the dark.

"At first this precious bag seemed light as a feather, but after I had walked twenty miles or more, and there was no sign of the coach, the wretched thing had become a load for a pack-horse.

"I struggled on a few miles further, and then, giving it up as a bad job, came to anchor on a heap of stones by the roadside, where I lighted my pipe and awaited the coach.

"Half an hour, an hour, another half-hour. Blame the coach! Would it never come?

"At last I heard the tantara of the guard's horn and the sound of wheels; the next moment the mail came rattling over the summit of the hill with the horses in a lather.

"Up sprang I on the heap of stones. 'Holloa! Holloa!' I shouted. I might as well have shouted to the dead, for neither the driver nor the guard deigned to take the slightest notice of my existence. The passengers did, though, and no wonder, for in my rage I started back and fell heels over head into the ditch behind. Fortunately for me, it was a dry one. The unfeeling ruffians positively roared with laughter as they dashed by, and I was left with my head in the ditch and my heels in the air.

"The passing glimpse I caught of the coach, however, enabled me to distinguish that it was packed inside and out, which accounted for the lordly disdain of guard and driver.

"There was nothing for it but to limp on to the next town, where I resolved to stay for the night, and try my luck with the next coach the next day.

"After another drag of seven or eight miles, I reached my destination foot-sore and weary. Of course my resources would not admit of my putting up at the hotel where the coach stopped, so after hunting about for another half-hour, I found a fourth-rate public-house called The Three Jolly Beggars, where I secured a bed for sixpence. Then I made friends with the mistress, a great ample-breasted, jolly woman of fifty, with black eyes and hair, and red cheeks. This honest soul gave me a

capital supper of tea, new bread, bacon and eggs for another sixpence.

"I soothed myself with a pipe before I turned in to roost, where, thinking of my poor lass, and wishing that her dear arms were around my neck, I fell fast asleep, and never woke till the landlady came and shook me up at nine to tell me that breakfast was ready. I was out of bed like a shot. Finding myself rather stiff in the fetlocks, I improvised a tub as well as I could, and sluiced myself from head to foot. That freshened me up a bit. Then more tea, more new bread, more bacon and eggs, and they freshened me up still more.

"I had to brush my own shoes, but that didn't hurt me. When I came to settle up I made myself free of The Three Jolly Beggars for two bob. That didn't hurt me either, especially as my good landlady threw me in a lunch in the shape of a couple of hard-boiled eggs, a slice of fat bacon, a huge junk of brown bread, and a pint bottle of beer. Then, bless her heart! with all sorts of kind wishes, she put me on the way, and at twelve o'clock I set off again with my sword and my carpet-bag.

"The day was fine, though frosty; and as I had no particular occasion for haste, I strolled leisurely along until the coach overtook me, when I was delighted to find there were very few passengers.

"As soon as I hailed the driver, he stopped. The guard leaped down, and we soon struck a bargain. Five bob for the lift, and a bob apiece for the guard

and driver, would leave me with a solitary 'Roberto' at the end of the journey.

"Up I jumped and took my seat on the box. The coachy was a smart, intelligent old fellow, and better still, a great play-goer. He beguiled the time by talking about Mrs. Siddons, the Kembles, Charles Young, Kean, Incledon, Macready, Elliston, Liston, and Mathews; and, above all, of John Emery, who was an acquaintance of his.

"When I mentioned my business at Gainsborough he became very communicative, told me that my manager (for, of course, I made up my mind that Mr. Abbott was to be my manager!) was a man of great probity, and much respected in the district; that the company were eminently respectable people, and that some of them were very clever.

"The drive was exhilarating, and by about four o'clock, when we stopped to change horses and refresh, I was as hungry as a hunter, so I said I would walk on a bit, which I did, and pitched into my luncheon. I had put it out of sight long before the coach overtook me. I don't mean to say I ate it all—but I stowed one half away in my stomach, and the other half in my pocket in reserve for an emergency.

"At last, about nine, we got to Gainsborough, and off I trotted to look out for lodgings. I soon got a couple of snug little rooms at a widow's, a Mrs. Wilkinson, for three bob a week, and went to bed after making a hearty supper on the remains of my lunch.

"Next morning I turned out fresh as paint, put on my best togs, and when I came down, quite impressed my good landlady.

"'Lord bless us, sir,' quoth she, 'why, you be a real London gentleman, for sure—but thear now, thee'll be all t' better for thy breakfast. Here be a mort o' buyutiful pickled herrings, and ingins, and a pot o' tay as good as thy mistress could make, if she were here to look after thee.'

"I had been much puzzled as to what I should do with that solitary 'Roberto' (the sole survivor of my last half-sovereign), and here I was 'in a land overflowing with milk and honey' and pickled herrings. I was too discreet, however, to express any astonishment, but I promise you, I did justice to the herrings, and the savoury, though not sweet-smelling, esculent with which they were profusely garnished. Before I took my departure, Mrs. Wilkinson inquired what I would like for dinner.

"'My dear madam,' I replied, in the most airy manner, 'the breakfast was so excellent that I leave the dinner entirely to you—only remember I'm neither Rothschild nor the Bank of England—so let it be as simple and inexpensive as you please,' and off I went in search of my manager that was to be.

"I found Mr. Abbott at the theatre counting the checks. Stay; by the way, was it a theatre, or a fit-up? I really forget; but if it was a fit-up, it was a very nice one; so suppose we call it a theatre.

"When I had presented my credentials, I had time to take stock of the old gentleman. He was a

little rotund fellow, with a face like a ripe Ribston pippin, a perky, saucy nose, bright, twinkling, merry gray eyes, a mouth of teeth like a horse, iron-gray hair, mutton-chop whiskers, a sort of shovel hat, white choker, black coat, black breeches, black gaiters, and black silk stockings, so please you. In fact, he only wanted a black silk apron to make him a rural dean.

"News spreads apace in these small places, and he had heard of my arrival overnight from the guard, while smoking his pipe (his constant custom) and taking his nightcap of brown brandy and hot water in the bar of the Green Dragon. I told him that I was willing and anxious to make myself useful in any department; and that if he gave me the chance, I'd do my level best with any mortal thing, or, at any rate, try to do it.

"I was engaged there and then, at a salary of a guinea a week, and it was arranged that I was to open on the following night in the Third Witch, King Duncan, the First Murderer, Rosse, one of the Apparitions, one of the witches' solos, the Physician, and 'the cream-faced loon,' in 'Macbeth.' Yes, and I did 'em too, my boy, or I suppose did for 'em. Anyhow, I spoke the words, or something like them.

"But stop; let me tell my story sequentially. Before I left the theatre I wrote home (there were no electric telegraphs in those days), telling the good news, and paid eightpence postage out of my last shilling.

"Then I returned to my lodgings, and astonished an Irish stew, which I found ready and waiting. Having secured the prompt-book, I set out after dinner for a walk of six or eight miles, and slipped into my parts. When I had made sure of the words, or thought I had, I came home, and with great complacency arranged my 'props' for action on the following night.

"I don't think I distinguished myself very highly by my polyphonous performances in 'Macbeth.' The fact is, I had only one wig for the Witch and Duncan, and as I did not know much about the art of making up, I couldn't get the beastly stuff off my face in time for my changes. So there was a family likeness between the weird sister, Duncan, the Physician, and the unfortunate 'cream-faced loon.' I got through Rosse's great scene with Macduff with only about half a dozen sticks. I even struggled through the Physician with but an occasional break-down; but when I came to form part of Macbeth's valiant army in the one scene, and of Macduff's yet more valiant army in the other—when I found myself coming off in one entrance as the 'cream-faced loon,' and rushing on in the next as the first officer—I got so helplessly mixed, that I completely corpsed poor Hamilton, our leading man; a great strapping fellow he was—six feet high or more. The eagle's feather in his Scotch bonnet touched the border-lights, which singed the tip of it. When he bade 'the devil damn me black' for a cream-faced loon,' and inquired, 'Where got'st thou

that goose look?' I ingenuously responded, 'My lord, there are ten thousand *geese* without,' which effectually took the wind out of his sails in that situation. In the next I came rushing on and gasped—and gasped—deuce a word could I articulate. He glared at me, and hissed through his teeth, 'Now then, stupid, spit it out!'

"Thus encouraged, in trembling accents I volunteered the information that,

> "'As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
> I looked towards Birnam, and anon methought
> The wood began to move upon its *head!*'

"The bold Macbeth didn't wait to hear any more, but rushed at me, and half strangled me. He let me have 'Liar and slave!' and the rest of it with a vengeance, and literally flung me off the stage, landing me in a heap in the prompt corner.

"Under other circumstances, of course, I should have resented this rough-and-ready punishment for my stupidity; but I was so hopelessly demoralized by my incapacity, and so conscious of my own shortcomings, that I submitted to it like a lamb; in fact, I rather fancied that I deserved all, and more than I got.

"When Macbeth made his exit, a minute afterwards, avowing his intention to 'die with harness on his back,' he went for me, sword in hand, and I think if he had got at me my professional career would have ended there and then. Fortunately, however, I had nothing more to do with him, so I kept out of the way until the play was over, and he

had simmered down a bit, when I made my excuses in the best way I could. Although a little hot-headed, he was a fine, large-hearted fellow, and not half a bad actor. My apologies were graciously accepted, and soon after we became sworn chums.

"Next day my wife came down by the mail. I was at the Green Dragon to meet her. She leaped from the coach into my arms, and I was the happiest man in England.

"To do honour to the occasion, my landlady had provided a hot tripe supper, with baked potatoes, a Welsh rabbit, and a jug of gin punch, which we enjoyed heartily, and 'shut up in measureless content.'

"Isn't it strange that such trifling details should dwell upon one's mind after all these years? Things that occurred yesterday I forget, while these things I remember as vividly as if they had occurred yesterday.

"My next parts were the 'furious Tybalt,' the Apothecary, and Friar John. I got on better with these than with my contributions to Macbeth. I fear, however, I distinguished myself most in the Apothecary, being then slender to attenuation.

"Mr. Abbott placed my wife on the free-list, and she came to the play every night. She was dreadfully angry that I didn't play Romeo, feeling quite sure I should have played it infinitely better than that 'great awkward creature, Hamilton.' It must be admitted that my friend the stalwart six-footer was not exactly the figure for the youngest of the Montagues. Perhaps, however, it was just as well

for my peace of mind, as well as for the public good, that I didn't play the lover, for the 'missus,' who had never even read the play, besides being totally unsophisticated and utterly ignorant of the routine of the theatre, got dreadfully exercised in her mind at the amoroso penseroso 'business' between Romeo and Juliet.

"She could see no necessity for it, and had she been Mrs. Hamilton (who played Lady Capulet), she would soon have sent that forward minx, Juliet, to the right-about!

"Having volunteered her opinions to this effect to a jolly old dame who sat next her in the front seats, she found her neighbour didn't agree with her; on the contrary, she thought both hero and heroine all too lovely, said she liked it 'deep,' and 'never enjoyed herself at the play unless she had a good cry.'

"The next piece was 'Pizarro,' in which I was cast Alonzo. The old lady was to the fore again, and when she knew that the pretty young creature who sat beside her was the wife of the valiant young Spaniard who killed the wicked Pizarro, she 'declared' on to her, and in a few nights they became on very friendly terms.

"Mrs. Marshall was a farmer's widow who had been left in fairly affluent circumstances. She farmed her own acres, and was a very shrewd, sagacious person. Having no relations of her own, and hating her husband's like poison, she took a violent fancy to us. Every afternoon we didn't act she

brought her sturdy pony and trap to drive us to the farm, to take tea and supper, and to play whist, in which I took dummy to the best of my ability. One night a terrible storm came on, and she insisted on our sleeping at the farm. Next day she and my wife arranged it between them that we were to stay there altogether — greatly to the grief of Mrs. Wilkinson, who was broken-hearted at our desertion, for she had begun to attach herself to us. I was sorry to leave her, but my poor lass had got rather peaky, and when I saw her eyes begin to sparkle, and her cheeks to bloom, I soon became reconciled to our stay at the farm. As for me, with the plethora of good living with which I was being continually crammed, I was getting fine and fit, as the farmers say.

"Time passed pleasantly and quickly — too quickly in fact, for at last we got to the end of the season, and had to go to Louth.

"The dame would not hear of parting with my wife, and, as I knew she would be well taken care of, I consented to her staying behind—anyhow, until I had prepared for her reception.

"Old Abbott and the ladies of the company went by coach, but the boys walked, and I walked with them. When we reached our journey's end, we found to our horror that the mail had just arrived with the news of the death of the Duke of Kent. In order to prove his loyalty, or rather in obedience to the behests of the magistrate, who was also the Vicar—without whose permission we could not open

our rural theatre—our good old manager was compelled to postpone our opening for a week! A pleasant look-out this for the poor players!

"Most of the people had been in Louth before. As for myself, I concluded to return to Gainsborough at once. Accordingly, I put my best foot foremost and walked all through the night, and got to the farm about nine next morning, where they made as much fuss with me as if I had just returned from a voyage to Van Diemen's Land.

"That week passed more quickly than any week I remember.

"I didn't tell them I must get back to Louth on Monday, because I had to make a start at five o'clock in the morning, and I knew they would have insisted on getting up to see me off.

"As soon as the clock struck, however, I leaped out of bed. It was dark as pitch, but I slipped into my clothes, sneaked out of the house, and made a start. It had been snowing overnight, and unfortunately the snow had given place to a black frost.

"Getting over the ground as well as I could, I reached the half-way house about eleven, had a mouthful of bread-and-cheese, a glass of mulled ale, and a pipe. Then off I went again. What with the frost and the sharp wind, I thought the weather was almost as bad as it could be. I was mistaken, however, for about two a dense fog sprung up—so dense and so dark that I couldn't see a hand's turn before me.

"Although we were to open that night with

'Virginius' and 'The Young Widow,' could I have been sure of making my way back in safety to the half-way house, I most certainly would have chanced it, whether we opened or shut; but hours before I had passed the junction of the four roads, so that if actually I succeeded in retracing my steps as far back, I could not be sure of taking the right turning. To keep straight on was the wisest and safest thing to do, so I plodded mile after mile through the fog and the darkness, without hearing a single sound of life, and without encountering a solitary sign of light, or human habitation, or landmark of any description whatever. That I had lost my way was now quite certain, and every step I took might lead me into one of the bogs or quagmires of the terrible fen country, and then, remembering Burbage's significant epitaph—in the Abbey—I arrived at the conclusion that no epitaph would ever be written over my nameless grave.

"The weather now began to change. The fog, without lifting or losing its density, became damp and drizzling, and the frost beneath my feet began to melt into sludge of the consistency of pudding. It was as much as I could do to drag my feet through it.

"Presently I was drenched to the skin, and stricken as with an ague. My teeth began to chatter, my limbs to tremble beneath me. At last I could scarce keep my feet. Yet either to stand still or to give up the struggle meant death—death imminent and inevitable.

"The thought of the poor wench I had left behind nerved my heart, and gave me strength and courage to struggle on for another half-hour, which seemed half a century.

"At last, having done all that man could do, I gave it up as a bad job. A few steps more and it would be all over, and then 'Exit Samuel Phelps!'

"'God help her, and take care of her, anyhow!' I gasped, as I fell forward, prone and helpless, to the ground.

"Even as I did so, at that very moment, loud and clear, and high above my head in the immediate vicinity, a silvery peal of bells rang out the chimes.

"A quarter, half-hour, three-quarters, four, then silence.

"Would it never strike?

"At last! One, two, three, four, five, six—seven!

"It was seven o'clock, and I had fallen at the very gate of Louth churchyard!

"The next instant I was on my feet. I knew my way well enough now.

"A few moments more and I was in the play-house. The boys stripped my wet things off me rubbed me from head to foot, and made me swallow two or three glasses of boiling-hot whisky and water. Old Abbott himself brought me not one, but two mutton chops, broiled to a turn, and a dish of tea; and with the aid of this strange, incongruous, but potent mixture, at eight o'clock I was on the stage ladling out 'Appius Claudius' as became a noble

Roman. Nay, more : after the play I kicked up my heels and danced about like a parched pea, in the humours of Mandeville in 'The Young Widow,' to the delight of a crowded audience, who yelled at my eccentric vagaries. I don't think I ever played to a better audience in my life.

"When the performance was over, Hamilton took me home to his lodgings and put me to bed, while his bonnie wee wife made me swallow a bowlful of gruel and sweet nitre.

"Thank goodness! when I awoke on the morrow, I found nothing worse than a skinful of sore bones to remind me of that perilous journey."

* * * * * *

"For thirteen weary years after that I toiled and struggled and slaved, all the while studying night and day, and trying to improve myself.

"Do what I might, I could scarcely make both ends meet, and after all these years of drudgery the goal of my hopes seemed further off than ever.

"It was in vain that I wrote to the London managers ; they didn't even answer my letters.

"At last, tired of roaming from pillar to post, we (my wife and I) decided to make the best of our way to town and try our luck there.

"Accordingly, in the year 1835, we returned to London worse off than when we left it, for now there were the bairns to be looked after.

"On my arrival in town I went from stage-door to stage-door, seeking interviews which were never granted.

"All the important theatres were hermetically closed to the poor country actor, so I tried the minors, from the highest to the lowest, always with the same result.

"Thus day after day passed away until the days spread into weeks, the weeks into months.

"Up to this time I had stood upon my dignity, and had only applied to be engaged for leading business; now I resolved to take anything I could get.

"I went to the Surrey, the Victoria, the Pavilion, seeking an engagement for the juveniles, the eccentrics, or the heavies. No go! I went to the Dust-hole* and offered myself for walking gentlemen and singing business. No go!

"I went to the Garrick and offered to play in some dog pieces, but I wasn't even good enough for the dogs. Then I went to that wretched little hole, the old Standard, to try for second old men; but the proprietor, a little man named Grundy, assured me that I was too slim and genteel for that line of business.

"I went to Astley's, where they were doing the 'Battle of Waterloo,' but found no opening there; in fact, the stage-manager informed me with dignity they never engaged 'hanyone at Hastley's hexcept Metropolitan performers.'

"I saw they were getting up Mazeppa, so in my despair I slipped up into the painting-room, and offered to give a hand there.

* The Queen's, Tottenham Court Road, afterwards Prince of Wales's.

SAMUEL PHELPS AS MACBETH.

"The painter, a great, long, unwashed fellow, with black corkscrew ringlets and a 'Flying Dutchman' hat, told me they required 'hartists, not hamatoors.'

"I wanted to go to Bow Street, but finding myself without a penny to cross Waterloo Bridge with, I walked round to Charing Cross, down the Strand, up Wellington Street, and by sheer force of habit struck out for Drury Lane.

"Instinctively I turned into the Harp, when whom should I stumble across but Hay, whom you will doubtless remember from his having recommended me to my engagement at Gainsborough. He was now a heavy swell, and had just become, by a lucky fluke, manager of the Plymouth Theatre.

"I must tell you that when I got to Abbotts' we had corresponded for some time, and I had frequently reminded him of my existence by sending him a newspaper with a play-bill inside it.

"As soon as he caught sight of me he exclaimed:

"'Eureka! By Jove! you're the very chap I want. Are you in an engagement?'

"'No; I wish to the Lord I was,' I replied.

"'Don't take the Lord's name in vain, young man. I'm going to open at Exeter on Monday next, and I can give you a berth.'

"'For leading business?' I inquired anxiously.

"'Of course; for what else did you think? Here, come round the corner; let's peck a bit, and we can make the requisite arrangements.'

"He was a brick, was Hay, and before we parted he had sprung a ten-pound note.

"When I got home I was ten years younger than when I went out that morning, and wasn't there a banquet that night!

"Next day we were off to Exeter, bairns and all. It was strange that Hay should on each occasion have marked the turning-point of my fortunes. From that moment I never looked back.

"I may say, without vanity, that upon my first appearance at Exeter I made a most favourable impression.

"I feel now as much as I felt then how much I was indebted to Hay's good offices. He put me up for all the great parts, and went from pillar to post proclaiming that it was to the credit of the ancient city that the Exeter playgoers had appreciated the two greatest actors of the century, namely, Kean and myself.

"I took heart of grace, and went to work with a will.

"I was up every morning at six in the summer and seven in the winter to perfect myself in the rudiments of my art.

"I had no time to lose now, for I was approaching my thirty-third year.

"My benefit was an enormous success; the greatest house, 'twas said, ever known in the theatre.

"At the end of the season I took advantage of a short vacation to run up to town to see what was doing.

"How different all appeared now to me! I was fashionably dressed, had a five-pound note in my

pocket, was elate and confident, and it seemed as if I had taken a new lease of life.

"Covent Garden was open under Osbaldistone, and Ben Webster was stage-manager there; but it was currently reported that he was about to open the Haymarket in the autumn.

"Fortunately my good genius, Mrs. Nisbett, was in town.

"When I had acted with her during the Exeter season she was very much pleased, and promised to help me if ever a chance occurred.

"I waited upon her; she gave me a most gracious reception and a most excellent breakfast, and what was better still, an introduction to Webster, recommending me in such glowing terms that he promised me an engagement.

"Previous to this I had written to Macready, who, it was alleged, had taken Covent Garden for the ensuing season. But I got no answer to my application.

"At all events, an engagement at the Haymarket was good enough, and I returned to Exeter triumphant. If anything, Hay and my wife were more jubilant about the matter than I was.

"In the darkest hour she had never doubted that I should get to the top of the tree.

"We now went on a series of flying visits to Plymouth, Devonport, and other places in the neighbourhood.

"In Plymouth I was very favourably received, but in Devonport they didn't think much of me, thus

realizing the adage that 'no man is a prophet in his own country.' From Devonport we went to Totnes, Brixham, and Torquay, where Webster fulfilled his promise by sending me my formal engagement for leading business at the Haymarket.

"We did wonderfully well during this little touring expedition, realizing considerably more than our winter salaries, and had a fine high old time of it in the garden of England, with fresh air and exercise and sea-bathing, eating of the fat and drinking of the sweet—living greatly on beans and bacon, eggs and butter, freshly-gathered fruit, and an abundance of clouted cream.

"Most of these delightful places abutted on the sea, and I arose daily with the sun, polishing up my old parts, and studying new ones. Like Demosthenes, I out-roared the winds and waves in my efforts to strengthen my voice.

"Finding myself rather awkward in my gait, at Plymouth I placed myself under a drill-sergeant, who gave me pepper for an hour or two every day, and came over to Torquay to renew the operation.

"To this day I owe a debt of gratitude to that honest soldier, since it is through his tuition that I know how to stand and walk like a man, and to move my limbs with grace and ease.

"From Torquay we went to Southampton for a few weeks. We had been there about a month, when one night, after playing Sir Edward Mortimer in 'The Iron Chest,' to my astonishment I got a hasty

note from Macready, inviting me to sup with him at the principal hotel.

"He received me very graciously, and told me he had come down *incog.* for the express purpose of seeing me act.

"He was favourably impressed, and offered me an engagement for two years at Covent Garden on liberal and progressively increasing terms!

"Of course I was already engaged at the Haymarket; but the Haymarket season commenced in August, while Covent Garden did not open till October. The temptation was too strong to resist, so, trusting to the chapter of accidents to adjust things, I kept my own counsel about the Haymarket, and signed and sealed there and then for Covent Garden, and with mutual professions of regard, Macready and I parted.

"At the beginning of August, 1837, Webster noticed me to open in Shylock on the 28th inst., and up I came to town by the mail on the 21st.

"When I landed at Hatchett's, in Piccadilly, to my astonishment I found the bold Ben awaiting my arrival.

"He was at a white heat with rage, and opened fire with:

"'So, sir! What's this I hear? You've signed with Macready for Covent Garden!'

"'I thought, sir——'

"'Thought, sir! Thought be blanked! You'd no right to think! You're engaged *to me*, sir, *to me!*'

"'I know it, sir; but I thought at the end of the Haymarket——'

"'End of the Haymarket!' he roared, or rather stuttered, 'end of my hat and my umbrella! If you try any games with me, I'll injunct you! I'll throw you into Chancery! I'll lock you up in the Queen's Bench!' and he danced round me as if he were going to jump on me.

"I was quite knocked over, feeling that I had placed myself in a false position, and that he had justice on his side; and yet amidst it all the irony of the situation tickled me.

"Twelve months ago I had slunk into London at the back of good speed; now I had come up by the mail, and there was a great Metropolitan manager anxiously awaiting my arrival. Twelve months ago I went from stage-door to stage-door soliciting an engagement of any description, and now the two foremost men of the age were fighting for me.

"I suppose something of the kind must have struck Webster, for he relaxed somewhat as he continued:

"'Humph! Perhaps after all I may be precious glad to get rid of you. So mind, rehearsal to-morrow, eleven o'clock sharp!' and off he went.

Next morning, as I was going in at the stage-door in Suffolk Street, I was served with a formal notice from Macready inhibiting me from appearing at the Haymarket, and notifying Webster to that effect.

"Before the rehearsal was over, Webster served

me with another notice, inhibiting me from appearing at Covent Garden, so that between them both I had rather a lively time of it.

"There was no clause in my agreement with 'Mac,' however, which could deter me from acting at the Haymarket, and I therefore opened in Shylock on August 28th, 1837, and was received with enthusiasm. I didn't think much of the newspapers at any time, and to tell you the truth, I've no distinct recollection of what they said then, but I do well remember that Webster said in the play-bill—'Mr. Phelps having fully established himself in the estimation of the public as one of the first actors of the day, both in talent and attraction, he will repeat Shylock, and will appear shortly as Sir Edward Mortimer, Othello, Hamlet, and Richard.'

"I was only six weeks at the Haymarket, during which I acted twice or thrice a week, alternating the place of honour with poor Tyrone Power, who was then at the height of his popularity.

"I played the Shakespearian parts twice each, and Mortimer, which was popularly associated with the traditions of the house (you remember, of course, it was there where Elliston galvanized 'The Iron Chest' into life after John Kemble had failed so signally in it at Drury Lane!), four times.

"There was no love lost between Macready and Webster, yet I must say they both behaved very handsomely to me, and, to make a long story short, Webster consented to let me off in time to open at the Garden, upon the understanding that I should

return to him during the vacation, which was, of course, a splendid arrangement for me.

"Covent Garden opened on the 30th of September with, I think, 'The Winter's Tale.'

"I made my last appearance at the Haymarket, October 7th, and was placed next week on Macready's salary list, though I didn't open until the 27th, when I played Jaffier to his Pierre and the Belvidera of Helen Faucit. My next part was Othello to his Iago; Jim Anderson was Cassio; Helen Faucit, Desdemona; and Miss Huddart, Emilia; and I dare to think that I held my own even in that combination.

"During the entire season of ten months, I only acted six or seven parts, though I'm bound to admit they were all good ones. I played Jaffier twice, Othello once, Rob Roy once, Adrastus once, Dumont in 'Jane Shore' to 'Mac's' Hastings, Helen Faucit's Jane and Miss Huddart's Alicia, and Cassius twice to 'Mac's' Brutus, Elton's Antony, Jim Anderson's Octavius, and Miss Faucit's Portia.

"As to Macduff, I don't know how often I played him; I think every Monday night during the season. Of course you've heard of the row during the fight. 'Mac' let fly at me, nearly giving me a crack on the head, as he growled:

"'D——n your eyes! take that!'

"For the moment I was flabbergasted, but when he returned to the charge I gave him a dose of his own physic. He returned the compliment, then

ne 'went' for me, and I 'went' for him, and there we were growling at each other like a pair of wild beasts, until I finished him, amidst a furor of applause.

"The audience were quite carried away by the cunning of the scene,' and shouted themselves hoarse, roaring on the one side 'Well done, Mac!' on the other, 'Let him have it, Phelps!'

"When the curtain fell I gave him my hand to get up. He was puffing and blowing like a grampus.

"As soon as he could recover his wind he commenced:

"'Er er-r, Mr. Phelps, what did you mean by making use of that extraordinary language to me?'

"'What did you mean, Mr. Macready, by making use of such extraordinary language to *me?*'

"'I, sir?'

"'Yes, you, sir! You d——d my eyes!'

"'And you, sir, d——d my limbs!'

"'I could do no less than follow so good an example.'

"With this the absurdity of the thing struck us both, and we burst out laughing.

"Everybody said the combat was most realistic, and I think it must have been. I know I had the greatest difficulty in preventing his slipping into me, for to tell you the truth, we were neither of us very graceful swordsmen, but what we lacked in elegance we made up for in earnestness.

"One thing is quite certain—we never got up the steam to such an extent again.

"The rest, the comfort, the home surroundings, and the permanent income made me swallow some bitter pills during my first season, but when at the opening of the second season I found Vandenhoff engaged to open in Coriolanus, and myself cast Tullus Aufidius, I felt myself wronged. I remonstrated. As a sweetener I got Leonatus Posthumus for my second part.

"A week afterwards 'Mac' took me out of Othello, which he played himself, with Vandenhoff for Iago. A week later, up went 'The Tempest,' and I found myself cast for that dismal duffer Antonio. Then came that bundle of dry bones Cato (isn't it astonishing that such turgid stuff should ever have had such a vogue?), and I was condemned to lift up Vandenhoff's tail in Marcus.

"All this I bore as well as I could till I actually found myself taken out of Jaffier (my opening part in the preceding season), and little Elton put over my head. My discontent then became unbearable. At this very moment I got an offer to star in Manchester and Liverpool, and I made up my mind to accept it.

"My wife, seeing how miserable I was becoming, and that, in point of fact, I was making everybody else miserable, fell into my views, so the next morning I bearded the lion in his den, and told 'Mac' frankly I could no longer endure the state of things, and had made up my mind to cut it, and go back to the country.

"He growled—'Are you an ass, or do you take

me for one? Do you imagine that, after fighting all these years for the throne, I'm going to abdicate for the purpose of putting you or any other man in my place? Are you aware of the struggle I had to hold my own against Young, Charles Kemble, and Kean? —of the degradation I had to encounter in being compelled to play second fiddle to that amateur boy Booth, to whose Lear they made me play Edmund —me! William Charles Macready! No, my dear fellow, watch and wait for your chance. It's sure to come some time, perhaps when you least expect it. Anyhow, to cut and run will look like failure!'

"'Cut and run!' said I; 'well—

"'"He that fights and runs away
May live to fight another day."'

"'That's true,' rejoined 'Mac;' 'but he who remains in the field of battle may change defeat to victory at any moment. There, now—come, come, don't talk nonsense, and we'll see if we can't make matters a little more pleasant for you.'

"So after all, fortunately for myself, as it turned out, ultimately I concluded to remain.

"What with bad engagements and prolonged vacations during the previous six or seven years, I had got into difficulties in various parts of the country. Besides this, I had to get into debt for my wardrobe and properties.

"My creditors let me alone during the first season, but as soon as the second one commenced

they began to fire away, and I was in continual hot water.

"Actors were not paid then as they are now; but it was useless for me to tell these people that my salary was not a great one, and that I must free myself by degrees; it was enough for them that I was at Covent Garden, and down they came upon me like a load of bricks.

"I had a lawyer's letter to-day, a summons to-morrow, and a copy of a writ the day after. Sometimes the summons or the writ came first. Every shilling of my salary was used to stave off these vampires, to pay costs and to gain time. I was tracked *into* the theatre, and waylaid *out* of it. I was pestered and tortured here, there, and everywhere, and the worst of it was, while I was endeavouring to pay the old debts, I was compelled to contract new ones for the daily necessaries of life.

"At last there were two or three judgments out against me, and I was liable to arrest at any moment. Driven to despair, I was obliged to absent myself from rehearsal; I was compelled to sneak into the theatre amongst the audience at night, and to get out amidst the crowd as well as I could.

"'Mac' naturally got riled at this, and took my excuses in very bad part. In this emergency my wife's common-sense came to my aid, as it had so often done before.

"'Sam,' said she, 'go and tell Mr. Macready the truth. He's bound to know sooner or later; the sooner he knows the better. I've a presentiment

that he'll help us, and in any case he has a right to know the facts.'

"This was a hard pill for me to swallow; but what can't be cured must be endured, so that night, when the play was over, I went to 'Mac' and made a clean breast of it.

"'Humph! a bad look-out. What right had you to get into debt?' he gruffly inquired.

"'I couldn't help it,' I replied.

"'Couldn't help it, sir!' he growled; 'no man has a right to live beyond his income. A speculator may incur liabilities, but no man with a fixed income is ever justified in living beyond it.'

"'Sir,' said I, 'I came to see if you were disposed to help me over my trouble; since you are not, and God doesn't seem disposed to help me either, I suppose I must go to gaol, and my wife and children to the workhouse.'

"'That be ——, sir!' he roared, as I turned away to leave the room. 'Who said that you were to go to gaol, or your wife and children to—— Don't talk stuff and nonsense! How much do you owe?'

"'I don't know,' I replied despondently.

"'Don't know? A pretty fellow you are to come and talk about finance without studying figures. Away you go; come to me to-morrow morning at twelve with a full, true, and particular account of every debt you owe in the world. Don't leave out a single shilling. Let me know the worst, and we'll see what's to be done.'

"With that he wrung my hand warmly, and bade me good-night.

"When I got home we went through the muster-roll of my liabilities, and to my horror I found they amounted to within a fraction of four hundred pounds.

"I did not sleep much that night.

"I presented myself according to appointment the next day, and handed the paper over to 'Mac.'

"He took it, read it carefully, looked glummer than usual, played the devil's tattoo with his feet, drummed with his fingers on the desk, then got up and strode about the room for a minute or two; at last he burst out abruptly:

"'You're sure four hundred pounds will cover everything?'

"'Quite sure,' I replied.

"After a moment's pause he went over to his desk and unlocked it, produced his cash-box, unlocked that also, got out his cheque-book, wrote a cheque, and without another word shoved it into my hand with the list of my liabilities.

"The cheque was payable to my order, and was for four hundred and fifty pounds. You remember how grim and grizzled he usually looked? At this moment his face was lighted up with that rare and beautiful smile which at times dignified and almost deified him.

"I was dazed, my head was swimming round, a great lump stuck in my throat, and I couldn't articulate a syllable; but instinctively I caught hold of his

hand and nearly shook it off; then, without one word, good, bad, or indifferent, I staggered out of the room.

"I think if I had stayed a moment longer I must have tumbled down in a heap. I know when I got outside it was some minutes before I could pull myself together.

"This godsend didn't come a moment too soon, for as I left the theatre by the stage-door I was arrested for thirty-six pounds. The bold bailiff, however, walked with me round to the bank, and that matter was soon settled.

"The only thing to accentuate the altered relations between 'Mac' and myself was that he became a little less grim and a little more considerate than usual. For all that I had some bitter bad parts to play.

"But there was one comfort, I was not alone unhappy; everyone had to put his or her nose more or less to the grindstone.

"Charles Mathews jibbed at Fag, but he did him for all that, and did it a deuced sight better than he could have done Jack Absolute; and he kicked awfully at Roderigo, but he had to do him, and a precious mess he made of the part.

"I don't think Anderson swallowed Octavius Cæsar with avidity, and I am sure Helen Faucit didn't gush at Portia ('Brutus Portia'), nor was Mrs. Warner particularly *entêté* with the Queen of France, a part of twenty lines, in 'Henry V.' In fact, we all growled, but we all submitted; Vandenhoff

was chief growler in the Chorus, Warde followed suit in Williams, Elton as Exeter, Anderson as Gower (a part of thirty lines), and I growled as loudly as anyone as the Constable of France. But our discontent was the public gain, for it certainly was a most magnificent production. We've none of us been able to touch it, or even come within a hundred miles of it, since.*

"Conspicuous among the great events of the season was the production of 'Richelieu,' in which I had another bitter bad part to play, of a few lines—that old thief Joseph. During the first run of this noble work, my old friend Hay came up to town

* My friend, Mr. Higgie, the eminent comedian, himself a member of Phelps' company at the Wells, and for years afterwards stage-manager with Augustus Harris, the elder, at Covent Garden and the Princess's, and with myself at Liverpool, has enabled me to quote a singularly apposite corroboration of Phelps' opinion on this subject.

On the first night of this magnificent production, while Higgie sat spell-bound in the upper boxes admiring the unfolding of the superb panorama (Clarkson Stansfeld's last stage work), which immediately preceded the Siege of Harfleur, two elderly gentlemen beside him began openly to express their admiration.

One of them appeared to be rather deaf, and as he spoke rather loudly, this conversation became audible amidst the general silence :

The deaf gentleman. "Charles, these are superb pictorial effects."

The other gentleman. "I believe you. They are magnificent ; we were denied such help to acting in our time."

The deaf gentleman. "Alas! yes ; but let us not, therefore, underrate the skill and the judgment which have invented them, for they ennoble and elevate the art itself. Here the player and the painter keep pace with the poet."

The other gentleman. "You are right, they do ; and my envy expires in speechless admiration."

These two gentlemen were Charles Young and Charles Kemble !

J. C.

HELEN FAUCIT.

and engaged me to play at Exeter in the vacation. He was a man of taste, and of course was much struck with 'Richelieu;' indeed, he could talk of nothing else.

"When I got down to Exeter, where, as I told you, I had been very popular, I found myself announced for Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Shylock, and, to my horror, Richelieu for my benefit. Besides this, Richard was billed for Saturday.

"I had not acted any of these parts during the last season. They all required reading up, and as there were long rehearsals besides, I found it was utterly impossible for me to do Richelieu.

"'But every place is taken for Friday night,' urged Hay; 'what's to be done?'

"'Done!' said I; 'since you've been ass enough to make the announcement, you must play the Cardinal yourself, and I'll do my original part of Joseph.'

"There was no other way of getting out of the difficulty, so Hay set to work and hammered the words into his head. As for me, I had my work cut out to get through the other parts.

"Well, Friday night came, and there was an enormous house. When the Cardinal came on, they didn't take much notice of him; but they gave me a tremendous reception.

"That, however, was all they did give me.

"Hay was a capital actor, and though not Richelieu, he knew his way about, and steadily walked to the fore, while, of course, I retired and took a back seat.

"At length we reached the last scene. You remember that Joseph has only one good line, a line, too, which usually elicits a great round of applause, and I flattered myself I should certainly 'have them' there. When, however, I stepped forward and exclaimed, 'Fall back, son; it is our turn now!' I waited for the customary 'round.' Just as it was coming down, a fellow in the pit roared:

"'Hold on, boys; hold on! He's going to let out; I told you he'd let 'em have it hot before he had done!'

"This indiscreet partisan floored my only effect, and I dried up ignominiously without even a 'single hand,' while Hay walked over my head triumphantly, and collared all the applause.

"Still, as the house was crowded, and I got half the receipts, I pocketed the affront with perfect equanimity.

"When I got back to town, I went to the Haymarket with 'Mac,' Mrs. Warner, and Helen Faucit.

"We opened early in August, 1839, with 'Othello:' he was the Moor; I was Iago; Miss Faucit, Desdemona; and Mrs. Warner, Emilia.

"Three nights afterwards I was cast that detestable Beauseant in 'The Lady of Lyons.'

"'Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind.'

"Imagine my mortification when I found myself —in the very theatre where I had opened in Shylock, where I had made my mark and been 'starred'

as Hamlet and Richard—condemned repeatedly to Antonio, the Ghost and Henry VI.

"'Tis true I played Jacques and Master Walter with Ellen Tree, but they don't count for much, and my only original part was a very bad one, Onslow, in Bulwer Lytton's play, 'The Sea Captain,' which, despite Thackeray's 'slogging,' drew great houses, and was acted for the 38th time for Webster's benefit, January 15, last night of the season.

"On the 20th I went with 'Mac' to the Lane, where poor Hammond was fighting against fate.

"Then we returned to the little house in the Haymarket, where 'Mac' opened in Hamlet; Warde was Claudius; I was the Ghost; Mrs. Warner, Gertrude; and Priscilla Horton, Ophelia.

"During this season Webster engaged Kean and Mrs. Kean to star against Macready upon alternate nights.

"Although we had great 'business,' there was constant snapping and snarling between the high contracting parties.

"Macready produced Talfourd's play, 'Glencoe,' and distinguished himself highly as Halbert Macdonald. Besides this he did a play of Serle's, which was not up to much, called 'Master Clarke.' I played Glenlyon in 'Glencoe,' and some nondescript in the other play. I had a few leading parts, such as Master Walter, Joseph Surface, that idiot Faulkland, and that platitudinal humbug Peregrine in 'John Bull.'

"I had to swallow Baron Steinfort and Major

Oakley as well as I could; but when it came to Egerton, to Maywood's Sir Pertinax, I was inclined to kick over the traces, and go back once more to the country.

"While I was hesitating, I made a great hit in Old Dornton. That and the great length of the season (for I must tell *ye* that through the influence of Bulwer Lytton and Macready, and principally through the great success of 'Money,' the Lord Chamberlain's stupid restrictions were rescinded, and the theatre was now open all the year round), which extended over nearly two years, decided me to remain.

"I finished my long engagement at the Haymarket December 7th, and rejoined 'Mac' at old Drury on Boxing Night, 1841, when we opened with a magnificent revival of 'The Merchant of Venice.'

"'Mac' had taken the National Theatre, which had fallen to a very low ebb, with the view of devoting it to the national drama. There was not a man or woman amongst us who had served under his banner at the 'Garden' but did not want to be with him at the 'Lane;' and I certainly esteemed it a compliment when he told me that I was the first man to whom he offered an engagement.

"But how about the bad parts?

"Oh, hang the bad parts! Of course they worried me as much as usual, but I had grown older and wiser, and knew better. I knew now it was unreasonable to expect 'Mac' to abdicate in

my favour. To be frank, I wouldn't have done it myself.

"Of course, I had to take what I could get in the way of business, sometimes good, sometimes bad, sometimes indifferent.

"One of the most notable events of this season was the production of Douglas Jerrold's comedy, 'The Prisoner of War,' in which I astonished everybody as Captain Channel.

"Jerrold and I had never met since we parted in a huff in Lombard Street all those years ago.

"At the end of the play Master 'Dug' came round to pay me a cynical compliment or two.

"I grinned, and said, 'Well, little scorpion, you're a good playwright, but a bad prophet. You don't seem to think me such "an infernally bad actor" to-night; I'm getting considerably more than "thirty bob a week," and this is not a "second-rate country theatre!"'

"'Bah!' he growled, as he turned away; 'the biggest fools always have the biggest luck.'

"As my star was then rising, I could afford to laugh at his cheek.

"It has been said that Jerrold's cynicism really veiled a tender heart. For my part, I was always of Sir Peter Teazle's opinion, that 'True wit has more to do with good nature' than Douglas Jerrold ever 'appeared to be aware of.'

"One thing is quite certain, if ever he could say a smart or satirical thing at the expense of his nearest or dearest friend, the spiteful little wasp never de-

prived himself of the pleasure of inserting his venomed sting.

"The cast of 'Venice Preserved' had always been a bone of contention from the first moment that I joined Macready. This season Elton, to his great grief, was taken out of Jaffier and put into Priuli, which nearly broke the poor little fellow's heart; Anderson was given Jaffier, and I was relegated to Pierre, to which I have stuck ever since.

"The morning of the very night when we were to act this play, when I came to rehearsal, I was astonished to find a great long-legged fellow ladling out Pierre, to a select audience, consisting of 'Mac,' Serle, George Ellis, the Prompter, and Macready's stage-manager, 'Old Pegleg Wilmot,' so called from his wooden leg.

"I didn't know what to make of it, till Ellis came and told me it was a young man from the country giving Mac 'a taste of his quality,' in the hope of getting an engagement.

"The young man was Jack Ryder, and I'm happy to say he got his engagement, though he gave me 'fits' for a minute or two.

"Stop! Let me think!

"He didn't join us till the next season, when he opened in 'The Banished Duke.'

"At the end of the season I returned to the Haymarket. Nothing noteworthy occurred during my stay, except a row with Charles Kean during the run of Sheridan Knowles's 'Rose of Arragon,' which was written expressly for Kean.

ALFRED WIGAN AS MONSIEUR TOURBILLON, AND MRS. WIGAN AS VIRGINIE.

"Unfortunately for him, my part, Almagro, was too strong, or his too weak; anyhow, I got the pull, and he didn't like it. I don't suppose I should have liked it myself, especially if I had to pay the piper, which Kean did, for he bought the play right out and paid the author handsomely.*

"During this engagement I played Sir Giles twice to Billy Farren's Marrall, and for my benefit I played Sir Edward Mortimer and the Duke Aranza, Farren doing Adam Winterton, and the beautiful Nisbett, Juliana.

"I returned to 'Mac' in October, for his last season at old Drury, when we opened with the most superb production of 'As You Like It' the world has ever seen or ever will see.

"This season I played Manly ('Provoked Husband'), Damas, and Dentatus, Leonato, and Sir Robert Gascoigne ('Henry IV.'). Then came a barbarous thing; I was taken out of Posthumus (which was given to Anderson) and relegated to Belarius. We had a dreadful row about this, which resulted in another sweetener—Thorold in Browning's fine but crude play, 'A Blot in the Scutcheon.'

"I distinguished myself highly in it, but the play did not attract, and was acted only three nights, although it was backed up with a new farce, and by the opera of 'Der Freischutz.'

"Besides a beastly part, called Byerdale, in 'The

* I remember Kean complaining to me very bitterly about this transaction, alleging that Knowles had written up Almagro for the express purpose of flooring, or, as he said, "flummuxing him." J. C.

Secretary,' I played Dunstan in the tragedy of 'Athelwold'—not yours or Dumas', my boy, but Smith's.

"Despite my discontent at my bad parts, man at the best is an inconsequential animal; so when my benefit was fixed, instead of devoting it to my own glorification, I thought how I could best get everybody into my programme, and the result was such a cast of 'The Winter's Tale' as the stage has never witnessed except upon that particular occasion. There was 'Mac,' of course, for Leontes; Ryder for Polixenes; Anderson for Florizel; Elton for Camillo; The Clown, Shepherd, and Autolycus, by Keeley, W. Bennett, and Compton; and Antigonus, myself; Helen Faucit for Hermione; Mrs. Warner for Paulina, and Mrs. Nisbett for Perdita; while Mrs. Keeley and Priscilla Horton were the Mopsa and Dorcas.

"Think of that, my boy! Did you ever hear of anything like it?

"Besides this, we did Planché's 'Fortunio.' Not a bad bill, was it?

"By this time Macready and I had learned to understand each other, and it was a great grief to me when the last night of his management came."

"Was it really so wonderful after all, as the old fogies tell us?" I here inquired.

"I tell *ye*, sir, there were certain performances given under that management which were never equalled in the past, and never can be excelled in the future!

"I'll take one production in which both 'Mac' and myself played second fiddle; I mean 'As *Ye* Like It.'

"Apart from Clarkson Stansfeld's scenery, the music and the mounting—look at the cast! Good God, sir, look at the cast! There was Nisbett as Rosalind! Not having seen her, *ye* don't know what beauty is. Her voice was liquid music—her laugh—there never was such a laugh—'her eyes living crystals—lamps lit with light divine'—her gorgeous neck and shoulders—her superbly symmetrical limbs—her grace, her taste, her nameless but irresistible charm. There was Mrs. Stirling as Celia—let me tell you a deuced fine woman in those days—then and always a most accomplished actress. That imp of mischief, Mrs. Keeley, the best Audrey, and about the best all-round actress I have ever seen; the beautiful Miss Philips as Phœbe; the velvet-throated Romer as Cupid, in 'The Masque.' Priscilla Horton, Sims Reeves, Harry Phillips, Allen and Stretton (a complete English Opera Company) for the music. Jim Anderson (you've no idea what a splendid actor he was then) for Orlando, and his brothers, Jacques and Oliver, by Harry Lynne and Elliot Graham, a strapping six-footer and an admirable actor. Ryder was the banished Duke, Duke Frederick was George Bennett, Elton the First Lord, and Le Beau, Handsome Hudson, as we used to call him; Touchstone, Keeley; William, Compton; Old Billy Bennett, Corin; 'Mac,' Jacques; myself, Adam; and I forget the others.

"Aye, aye; *ye* may rave about Helen Faucit's Rosalind, but *ye* never saw the Nisbett. I admit Miss Faucit's ability is great and unquestionable,

but so is her affectation. The truth is, she gave herself airs—and a little of that went a long way with me. We didn't get on well together, and I fear we have never been just to each other; still, she is a great actress, and a woman whose character and conduct do honour to her profession."

(Apropos of my "ravings" about Miss Helen Faucit's Rosalind, Macready himself stated to Lady Pollock (see her delightful little book, *Macready as I Knew Him*, p. 21): "The only shortcoming in the whole performance was the Rosalind of Mrs. Nisbett, a very charming actress in many characters, but not equal to that. She was not disagreeable, but inadequate."

If "those laugh best who laugh last," *my* Rosalind can afford to laugh, inasmuch as at the end of that very season la Nisbett was taken out of Rosalind, and on the occasion of the Queen's command, June 12th, 1842, Miss Faucit resumed the part.

With reference to my "ravings," I maintain now what I maintained then.

I have seen every Rosalind of my time, from Ellen Kean and Charlotte Cushman downwards. The one of these ladies was enchanting, the other was exuberant. There was no possibility of mistaking the former at any time for aught else but what she was—the most womanly of women—while the latter presented such a "swashing and a martial outside" that she appeared the most manly woman that ever donned the *subligaculæ*. Both were superbly

proportioned creatures, and their statuesque outlines suggested great Herè's self—or Pallas Athenè masquerading 'neath the garb of the Duke's fair daughter—yet, there the resemblance stopped, for the mature Ellen's features were far too pronounced for the Hellenic type; indeed, she might, with great advantage, have spared a little of the superfluity of her most prominent organ in favour of the massive Charlotte, to whom, in the region of the olfactory nerves, nature had been most niggardly.

Both performances were evidently based upon the traditions of the Jordan Rosalind—the most distinguishing characteristics of which were those of the "saucy lackey" who "plays the knave" with Orlando, and who makes the woods alive with archness, sprightliness, and repartee; such, I imagine, must also have been the mode of treatment adopted by Phelps' model Rosalind, the beautiful Nisbett.

It was reserved for *my* Rosalind to develop the poetic side of the character, and to present an impersonation of surpassing subtlety and grace—of dignity and delicacy, of truth and beauty—an impersonation, interpenetrated (even amidst its most innocent and ingenuous ebulliences of delight) with pathetic minors and tremulous undertones of languorous passion—passion impermeated with love-breathing sighs, sunny smiles, and delicious tears, which always thrilled at least one auditor with a strange emotion.

From the first time I met her in my boyhood in Edinburgh, where I played Sylvius to her, to the

last, when I had the honour and the pleasure of being her Orlando in Manchester, I have seen no one who, for grace and glamour, for personal fascination or poetic beauty, could possibly be compared with the "divine Helen."

In Edinburgh (where De Quincey was as "gone" about her Antigone as I was about her Rosalind), she was approaching the rich ripe prime of virgin womanhood (ye gods! what a dazzling apparition burst upon my sight when I first beheld "Jove's own page," the veritable Ganymede in the Forest of Arden!); in Manchester she had reached its maturity, and I know not at which period I admired her the most. I do know, however, that I was then, and remain still, bond slave both to her beauty and her genius.

I am grateful that I saw this great actress when her matchless powers were at their zenith, for they left an impression on my youthful mind which time can never efface.

There is at present only one Rosalind on the stage, and her name is—— Yet, hold! Let me check my too impulsive pen, let me pause ere I cast down the apple of discord, which would most assuredly bring on my devoted head the wrath of a crowd of beautiful and indignant Rosalinds!)

Mr. Phelps resumed his narrative somewhat after this fashion:

"When Macready decided upon going to America, he invited me to dinner at Clarence Terrace, to meet

Maywood, the Scotch comedian, who had negotiated the American engagement.

"By-the-bye, this fellow was a capital actor. I am under the impression that, before he went to Yankeeland, he had acted Shylock at one of the patent houses with indifferent success, and had then dropped into the Scotchmen. His Sir Pertinax was splendid, and he had recently distinguished himself at the Strand by his performance of Sir Andrew Mac something or other in a piece called the 'Rights of Women.'

"After dinner 'Mac' proposed that I should accompany him to America, offered me very handsome terms, and undertook to pay a thousand pounds in the bank, so that my wife should have ample resources to draw upon during my absence.

"Apart from the fact that we had become very much attached to each other, the proposal was a tempting one. Besides, there seemed little or no chance of an opening in town, and I was rather disposed to close with him, so when we parted for the night I thanked him, and said I would consult my wife and let him know the next day.

"When we left the house, Maywood, who had a gruff, brusque way with him, growled abruptly:

"'You're not going to be such an ass as to accept this proposal?'

"'Why not?' I inquired.

"'Why not? Don't you see that his absence will be your opportunity? He's going abroad! If you remain at home you'll step into his shoes.'

"I didn't say anything then, but when I got home I talked the matter over with my wife. Maywood's hint accorded with her inclinations; she couldn't bear the thought of our separation. So the next day I wrote thus:

"'DEAR MR. MACREADY,

"'Some years ago, when I thought of returning to the country, you said to me, "He who remains in the field may change defeat to victory at any moment."

"'*I* have decided to remain on the field.

"'Notwithstanding, believe me very grateful for your proposal, and faithfully yours,' etc.

"A week afterwards 'Mac' sailed for America, taking Ryder with him, and I remained behind, waiting, like Mr. Micawber, for 'something to turn up.'

"It 'turned up' in a strange and unexpected manner.

"It so happened that in the early part of '43 our dear friend and comrade poor Elton, in returning from an engagement in Edinburgh, was lost in the wreck of the *Pegasus* off Holy Isle.*

* This unfortunate gentleman, although of diminutive stature, was an admirable and accomplished actor. Macready esteemed him so highly that he especially selected him to play Amintor in "The Maid's Tragedy," and Beauseant in "The Lady of Lyons." His dimensions, though, were always against him. During his engagement at Drury Lane, Macready, who had acted the Duke of Aranza in "The Honeymoon" once or twice, found the part unsuitable, and ceded it to James Anderson, then the beau-ideal of a *jeune premier*.

Elton esteemed this a grievance, and complained bitterly on the subject.

"Although a most honourable, provident, and bstemious man, he had been so miserably paid, and o frequently out of engagements, that it was utterly mpossible for him to make any provision for his old lind father, his wife and children, of whom there vere seven.

"Every manager and every actor in the kingdom ame nobly to the help of these poor bereaved ones.

The "eminent one" replied: "Err—err—my dear Elton, I thought could have played the part myself, but—err—I found I couldn't."

"I think I could have played it, Mr. Macready."

"Well, I didn't. The fact is—err—err—my dear Elton, you are too ttle for the part."

"Edmund Kean was a little man, sir."

"Edmund Kean little!" growled Mac, opening his eyes. "My God! Sir! Edmund Kean was a *giant*."

"The General Theatrical Fund" owes its existence in great measure o Mr. Elton's initiative, and that of a poor gentleman who was afterards prompter in one of my theatres.

Tyrone Power, who was lost in the *President* (March, 1841), was ne of Elton's oldest and dearest friends. It was said, in an interesting publication of the period, that when Elton heard the news, "his ace became pale as ashes, and for more than an hour he walked to nd fro in violent agitation, exclaiming, 'Poor fellow! poor fellow! Who would have thought it?'"

Afterwards, conversing on the subject, he expressed himself in these emarkable words: "I think I can imagine what Power must have elt when the waves first rushed over his head. In all supreme noments our grief is caused by the loss of joys in futurity. We either think of the past nor the present, but only bewail what might ave been. I am sure that Power, in the agony of parting from life, elt no consolation that it had been a brilliant and a happy one. I can nagine him crying out, 'Why can't I live to enjoy more?' I can ancy the lights of the Haymarket flashing before his eyes, and the oaring of the waves taking the sound of a burst of applause, and that is last frantic thought was, 'Oh! why—why was I not permitted to njoy all this?'"

Let us hope that poor Elton, in his own hour of trial, looked forward ith more hope for the future than regret for the past.

J. C.

"Murray, of Edinburgh, got together a hundred pounds, and sent it up at once. The managers everywhere gave the entire receipts of a benefit, and a subscription of upwards of three thousand pounds was raised. To the honour of Elton's children, be it said, they would not touch a farthing till a small annuity was purchased for his poor blind father.

"Mrs. Warner, myself, and a few others, put our heads together to raise something for their immediate wants, and we gave a benefit performance at the 'City of London' Theatre with desirable results.

"We now announced one to take place at Sadler's Wells.

"The Wells at that period had sunk to the lowest ebb. The business was so awful that the company were playing down to two or three pounds a night, and there was the greatest difficulty in keeping the doors open at all.

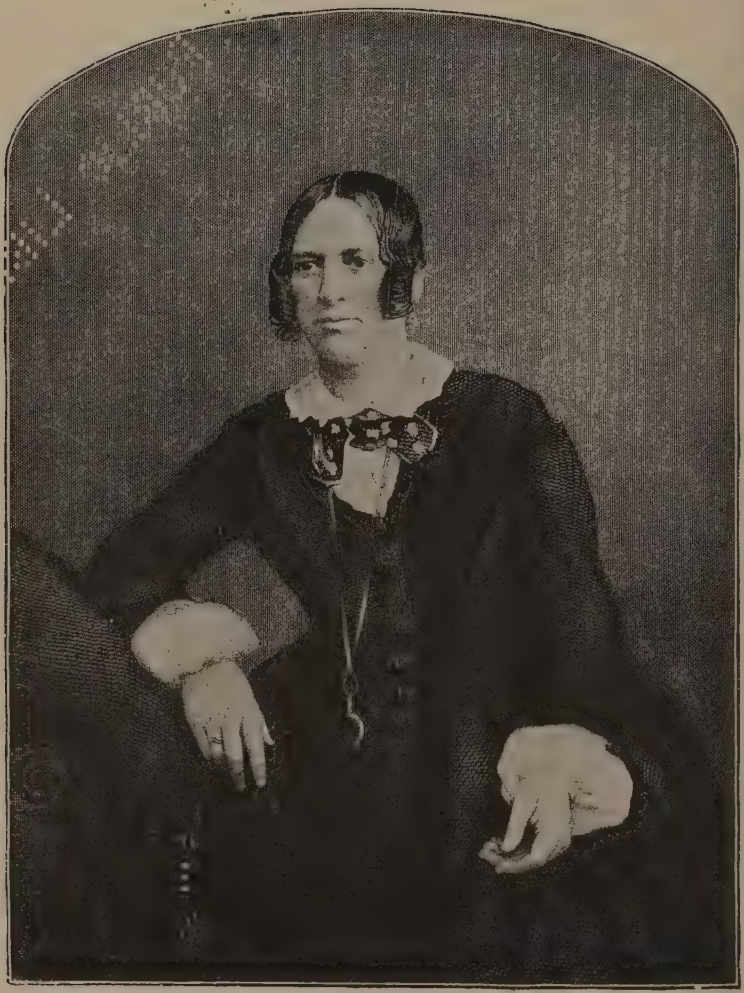
"It was in this state of affairs that on one Saturday in April, 1843, the Elton benefit took place.

"To the astonishment and delight of everyone the receipts amounted to fifty-five pounds.

"That house and that performance decided my career for the next eighteen years!

"The play was 'Othello.' I was the Moor; Henry Marston, Iago; John Webster, Cassio; Miss Caroline Ranckley, Desdemona; and Mrs. Warner, Emilia.

"Serle wrote an admirable address, and delivered it more admirably still. To say that they leaped at



MRS. WARNER.

us would give but the faintest idea of the enthusiasm with which we were received.

"Tom Greenwood was the manager, and when we settled up, he said, 'This is going to be a big thing. Come and act here, and I'll give you twenty pounds a week.'

"I had no engagement in view, nor any likelihood of obtaining one, but I knew that Greenwood had no money, so I took stock of the situation at once.

"'My good fellow,' said I, 'don't talk nonsense; I know the state of the land here, and what you are doing. If the money don't come in, you can't pay. I'll tell you what I'll do; if you'll undertake to secure the theatre, we'll go into partnership.'

"Tom jumped at the idea, and in the course of forty-eight hours the Phelps, Warner, and Greenwood management was arranged on the following basis: I was to have twenty pounds a week, Mrs. Warner the same. As a sweetener for her, her husband had five pounds a week as treasurer, Greenwood had five pounds a week as acting manager, and five pounds a week for his wardrobe. These sums were charged to the current expenses on the pay-sheet weekly. If they didn't come in of course we couldn't get 'em, if they did we should get 'em, and if there was any surplus it was to be divided *pro rata*.

"The new Theatre Act, which removed the restrictions to our performing the legitimate drama, had been carried, thanks to the personal influence of Macready and Edward Lytton Bulwer (for which

statues ought to be erected to their memory in every theatre in the kingdom!), and a glorious vision opened before me of a popular theatre with Shakespeare and the poetic drama.

"I kept this object steadily in view night and day. With this object I quitted the West-End for the North, and on Monday, May 27th, 1844, our memorable management commenced—a management the record of which will, I dare to hope, be remembered long after I am dead and gone."

So far Mr. Phelps has told his own story; let me now say a word or two for him.

It absolutely takes one's breath away to recall the muster-roll of his triumphs.

There is no such monument of skill, taste, enterprise, research, and unremitting industry in the annals of *any* stage!

Of "the master's" works he did all except "Richard II.," the historical Trilogy of "Henry VI.," "Troilus and Cressida," and "Titus Andronicus."

In addition to this series of unique and unrivalled achievements, he revived, after centuries of neglect, Webster's "Duchess of Malfi," admirably arranged by the author of "Orion;" Beaumont and Fletcher's "King and no King," and other plays of the Elizabethans; he acted all Sheridan Knowles's plays; all Bulwer's; all Talfourd's; "Brutus" (Howard Payne); "Damon and Pythias" (Banim); "The Patrician's Daughter" (Marston); nearly all the comedies of Goldsmith, Sheridan, Colman, Reynolds,

and Morton. Of original works, all James White's historical plays except "The King of the Commons" (in which Macready had already anticipated him). For John Savill, of Haystead, he paid Mr. White £400, a large sum for a suburban theatre; a larger sum, in point of fact, than Charles Reade received at this epoch for all his dramatic works during ten years!

He did Boker's noble drama, "Calaynos;" Lovell's adaptation of "Ingomar," and "Love's Sacrifice;" George Bennett's "Retribution;" Tom Taylor's "Fool's Revenge;" and I cannot recollect (since I am merely quoting from memory) how many others.

At our present rate of progress, here is work enough for every theatre in London for the next quarter of a century.

When the Phelps and Greenwood *régime* commenced I was too young to form a capable opinion; but as the years went on, and I began to know something of the subject, every new production was a new surprise, a new delight, and I realize now, more fully than ever, the debt of gratitude which I, and all the rising generation of that period, owe to that master mind.

Of all his great works I missed only three, "All's Well that Ends Well," "Love's Labour's Lost," and the one of all others which he always assured me was his crowning triumph, "Pericles."

I have endeavoured to rectify this omission by adapting the subject myself, and some day, when—but nothing is certain but death and quarter-day.

As I have already stated, his limited resources, and the small area in which he moved, restricted him from the sumptuous embellishments and gorgeous splendour of previous and, indeed, of later revivals.

His staff of auxiliaries, even in his greatest works, rarely exceeded two score, but he contrived to multiply his resources by a process as ingenious as it was amusing.

In "Henry V.," in the march-past before Agincourt, the troops defiled behind a "set piece" which rose breast-high. Madame Tussaud modelled eighty wax heads—these were fitted on "dummy" figures of wicker-work, clad in the costume and armour of the period. Every man of the gallant forty carried two of these figures, one on either side, attached to a sort of frame-work, which was lashed to his waist; hence it seemed as if they were marching three abreast.

As they tramped past, banners streaming, drums beating, trumpets braying, the stage seemed crowded with soldiers, and the illusion was so perfect that the audience never once discovered the artifice.

The distinguishing characteristics of the Sadler's Wells productions were clearness and intellectual vigour—the plain, straightforward meaning of the text was put before you without any supercilious veneer of subtlety, the decoration was sufficient but not superfluous; above all, there was nothing amphigamous about the acting. In this respect Phelps was particularly fortunate, inasmuch as the closing of

the great theatres enabled him to secure the services of an unrivalled troupe of experienced and admirable artists at small salaries.

He had a capable and industrious assistant stage-manager in Mr. "Pepper" Williams, while his partner, Greenwood (I should have said before that Mrs. Warner retired from the speculation two years after its inception), not only attended to the financial department, and took the weight of the production of the pantomime off his hands, but he also watched the waves of public opinion, and steered the ship in accordance therewith. Then he had the advantage of the sagacious advice of his friend Edward Leman Blanchard, who, it is now known, was the editor of the "Phelps' Shakespere."

In addition to all these, he had the good fortune to number on his staff Mr. Frederick Fenton, a scene-painter of indefatigable industry, extraordinary inventive skill, and remarkable ability.

It is perhaps not going too far to state that the success of the various productions was as much indebted to this admirable and accomplished artist as to "the master" himself.

Certain it is that no work was ever entered upon without Mr. Fenton being called into council—and in some instances the arrangement of the text was adapted to the exigencies of the scenic arrangements —and indeed rendered imperative by the limited area in which the painter's magic pencil produced its marvellous illusions.

Despite these aids, Phelps never could have got

through his Heraclean labours had he not husbanded his resources of body and mind ; hence he only acted four nights a week, and his rehearsals, which commenced usually at ten, invariably terminated at two.

The restricting of his acting to four nights a week was Greenwood's suggestion, who saw that his partner was such a "glutton" at his work, that if permitted to have his own way, he would soon kill himself. From his long acquaintance with the locality, Greenwood knew that no attraction would at that period pull the Islington public into Sadler's Wells on Friday and Saturday (now the best nights in the week!) ; hence these two days, every week, were set apart for Phelps' holidays, and were usually devoted to fishing, his favourite amusement.

On these occasions the "bill orders" were issued, and no matter whatever the attraction, the receipts oscillated between twelve and twenty pounds a night, rarely lower than the one, and seldom or ever, except on the occasion of a benefit, higher than the other.

I remember Greenwood telling me that on one particular Friday the rain came down so heavily that, of course, there was no fishing. Phelps sat very glum at home. Saturday, the rain fell heavier than before—the tragedian glummer than ever.

At night, with the actor's usual mania for the theatre, even when not acting, he took it into his head to stroll round from Canonbury Square to the "Wells." To his astonishment he found the theatre

crowded from pit to dome, with an enthusiastic audience of—"paper!"

The play was "The Wife." Mr. Henry Marston, a great local favourite, and an admirable actor, was the Julian St. Pierre, Mrs. Warner the Mariana. The performance went like smoke, and the applause was so great that Phelps feared the ramshackle old building was coming down about his ears.

Next morning he burst out abruptly to Greenwood with :

"Tom, I don't see why I shouldn't play on Friday and Saturday ; I should double the receipts."

"All right, old man," said Greenwood, "try."

He did try the next Friday and Saturday, and the next, and the next after that. The astute Greenwood (sly old fox) cut short the supply of "paper," and when the receipts had dropped down to eight and ten pounds a night the tragedian growled :

"Tom, I think you're right. The weather's changed, so has my mind ; henceforward I'll go fishing on Friday and Saturday."

"Away from the exercise of the art to which he so earnestly devoted himself, Mr. Phelps was simply to be regarded as a quiet country gentleman of reserved habits, fond of rural pursuits, addicted to the exercise of the gun and the fishing-rod, and, perhaps, prouder of his skill with both than of the warmest plaudits of an enthusiastic audience. During the theatrical vacation, he was to be found for many successive years at his favourite haunt, the Red Lion Hotel at

Farningham, in Kent, where he stayed for weeks together to enjoy the pleasure of trout-fishing in the river Darent, which ran its meandering course in front of the gardens of the old hostelry. The farmers in the neighbourhood never suspected that a visitor who conversed with them so freely about their crops was at the same time busy in studying the best modes of rendering the next Shakespearean play to be revived at the temple of Thespis on the banks of the New River. And it is on record that a Kentish yeoman, bringing his family to town for the purpose of seeing 'The Doge of Venice' at Drury Lane, and recognising a familiar voice and manner in the prominent actor, astonished the audience in the midst of the play by involuntarily exclaiming:

"'Blest if the "Dodge" isn't the old Farningham fisherman!'"

I am indebted to the courtesy of my friend, Mr. E. L. Blanchard, for the foregoing anecdote, and the following reminiscence of one of Phelps' sporting excursions. I give the anecdote in Blanchard's own words:

"In the autumn of '59, having to revise a play and to write the pantomime for Sadler's Wells, I went down to Farningham to confer with the 'master' on the subject. We had 'a fine high old time of it,' boating, fishing, shooting, etc., and he shirked returning to his work like a truant schoolboy. It was in vain I reminded him that the season commenced with 'Macbeth,' and that his presence was necessary for

rehearsals. He laughingly replied that Greenwood and Marston would attend to that portion of the business, and that he was determined to enjoy his holiday as long as he could. Accordingly, on the very day of opening, he delayed his departure till four in the afternoon, and went out shooting with a neighbouring farmer, while I remained behind to look after the packing.

"I don't know how many rabbits Phelps bagged, but he certainly caught something he hadn't bargained for.

"Dinner was ordered for three o'clock, but when half-past three came and there was no sign of him, I began to be alarmed. At last, within a few minutes of the hour, he came limping along, pale as death, supported by the farmer and the village doctor, who briefly explained that the farmer had lodged a charge of shot in his friend's left leg.

"'Of course you won't act to-night,' I said.

"'Of course I will,' replied Phelps. 'I've never broken faith with the public in my life, and I'm not going to begin now. Let me get a mouthful of something to stay my stomach before the coach comes up, and then I'm off. The doctor's coming with us. He's promised to extract these infernal things from my leg during the journey.'

"We had barely time to snatch a hasty meal when the Royal Mail drove up. During the drive to Dartford, while he smoked his cigar, the doctor extracted about half the charge. The rapidly improvised tourniquet, which had to be continually

removed, combined with the jolting of the coach, made the operation both tedious and painful—indeed, the extraction of each particular pellet realized (so Phelps said) 'the sensation of a dozen bees playing at cribbage, and pegging away with their beastly stings at the same hole.' When we got to Dartford we had to change to the train, the doctor still accompanying us. He had only succeeded in extracting the last pellet just as we reached London. Then there was a long drive in a cab, and we didn't get to Sadler's Wells till the overture was commencing.

"In a quarter of an hour's time Phelps was on the stage for Macbeth, moving about as calmly and coolly as if nothing had happened.

"Except myself, no one in the theatre, not even Mrs. Phelps or Greenwood, knew anything about the affair at Farningham till the play was over. Then, indeed, he collapsed, and swooned from pain and loss of blood!"

There can be no doubt that, had Phelps pitched his tent in the vicinity of the Strand, he would have achieved fortune as well as fame; but, alas! after eighteen weary years of unremitting toil, he quitted Sadler's Wells almost as poor as when he entered it, and he was approaching his sixtieth year when he had once more to commence his weary fight with fortune at the West-End.

After an ignoble squabble with Fechter about a broken engagement, Phelps returned to Drury Lane, where, thanks to the enterprise and sagacity

of Messrs. Falconer and Chatterton, he was secured for a term of years at the largest salary he had ever yet received.

On Saturday, October 14th, 1863, after an absence of twenty years, he reappeared at old Drury, making his bow as Manfred to an audience which crowded this magnificent edifice from dome to base, an audience which accorded him the most enthusiastic reception ever given to an English actor since the retirement of Macready.

Byron's mystic and undramatic poem was produced upon a scale of unparalleled splendour, which, combined with the popularity of the principal actor, assured a triumphant run up to Christmas.

On going round to offer my congratulations, at the end of this play on the first night, a poor, shabby-looking gentleman came and said something to Phelps in a low voice. They chatted together a little while, until Phelps called me aside and said :

"John, let me introduce you to the original Manfred, under Bunn's management, of this very theatre."

Yes, it was indeed poor Denvil, who had once been the talk of the town, and who, after the run of Manfred, was for many years a highly prosperous London manager, and who had now subsided into the office of pit check-taker at the very theatre of which he had once been the popular idol! The irony of fate surely could go no further.

Phelps' engagement at Drury Lane extended over

several years, during which he was the central figure of every work produced at the great national theatre.

Besides creating ten or twelve original parts, he repeatedly acted Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Henry IV., Wolsey, Lear, Shylock, Falstaff, King John, Posthumus, Jacques, Brutus, Werner, Bertuccio, Richelieu, Sir Peter Teazle, Cantwell, Job Thornberry; and upon one occasion he played for his benefit Jeremy Diddler, with a go, a verve, and a youthfulness of life and motion perfectly irresistible. As was formerly said of Lewis's Young Rapid, in this performance, nothing stopped him: he leaped over chairs and tables as if he had been a boy of twenty; indeed, he seemed the incarnation of the vexed problem of perpetual motion.

It must be remembered that at the period of these Heraclean labours, of which the acting formed the lightest part, although oscillating 'twixt threescore years and threescore and ten, he walked to and fro the theatre for rehearsals, a distance of four miles, daily.

After working together in harmony for a considerable period, during which many successes were achieved, a difference unfortunately occurred between Phelps and Chatterton in 1870, in consequence of the latter having adopted the responsibility of Mr. Boucicault's cynical apothegm that "Shakespeare spells ruin, and Byron bankruptcy."

The divergence now terminated in an open

rupture, which unfortunately led to prolonged litigation and ended in smoke, both litigants having to pay their own costs.

In this same year Phelps joined Mr. Labouchere at the Queen's Theatre for a grand spectacular production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which proved highly successful, and realized large sums for both actor and manager.

In 1871 Chatterton and Phelps became reconciled, and he remained at Drury Lane until the beginning of November, when he returned to the Princess's to create the part of Dexter Sanderson in Watts Phillips' play, "On the Jury," which ran for a considerable period.

He continued at the Princess's for the following season (1872), and opened on September 22nd in "Othello." Creswick was the Iago. These "gay and sturdy evergreens" played a round of Shakespearean characters to great business, and only a month before Christmas (when the most successful theatres are generally carried on at a loss) the management were realizing a profit of £200 a week on Phelps' performance of Sir Pertinax MacSycophant, when, from over-work, he broke down, and the curtain had to descend in the middle of the play.

This was the last night he ever acted under the management of F. B. Chatterton.

After a period of rest and recuperation, he joined Mr. Hollingshead's company at the Gaiety.

That his attraction remained unabated was evident from the fact that when he opened at the Gaiety the

week before Christmas, 1873—a week during which every theatre in the kingdom is usually closed, a week during which it is usually believed that it is impossible to attract a full house—he played to more money than was ever taken in the building.

I quote Mr. Hollingshead's own words: "He opened in Cantwell in 'The Hypocrite,' which he played for six nights *to the largest receipts ever known at the theatre,* and the following three nights were devoted to Colman's comedy of 'John Bull,' with Phelps as Job Thornberry, Toole as Dennis Bulgruddery, Charles Mathews as the Hon. Tom Shuffleton, Hermann Vezin as Peregrine, and Lionel Brough as Dan, supported by the general company. The receipts were equally great for these performances, and the orchestra was utilized for extra stalls. . . ."

Soon after this, when fulfilling an engagement with me in York, to his great delight some old playgoer sent him a play-bill, dated "Easter Monday, 1828," and recording his first appearance in the city, under the management of Mr. Sam Butler, a famous tragedian in his time.

The "master's" opening part on that occasion was the Sentinel in "Pizarro," and his next Captain Crosstree in "Black-Eyed Susan."

On the occasion of the present visit we opened with "Othello;" he was the Moor, and I played Iago.

He had never been in York since his first-born saw the light there.

Tired as he was, and dangerous as it was for him o go out in the cold night air, after so arduous i task — for he was then past sixty-five — when he play was over he insisted on taking me round o Stonegate, where he pointed out in the moon-ight the room in which his eldest child was born.

"Ah!" said he, "many a time have I seen *her* standing there, looking down upon me when I came n in the morning, and when I went away at night. That was five-and-forty years ago! The season was over here, and we had to go to Leeds. I was obliged to leave her behind me, because she was near her time; it wouldn't run to coaching; I used, therefore, to start on 'Shanks's mare' over Leeds Bridge every Saturday night as soon as the play was over, and get to York as the minster bells were calling to church on Sunday morning, and as regularly as they tolled twelve on Sunday night I started off and walked back to Leeds, arriving just in time for Monday morning's rehearsal.

"Yet, amidst it all, how happy we were, we two, boy and girl together!

"I can see her now in her plain white muslin dress, her great eyes shining like stars, her face lighted up like the moon herself. Every night when I went away, she used to stand there in the window yonder and look at me to the last!

"Ah! I was much happier then at five-and-twenty 'bob' a week, with her to share it, than I am now, when I get half the house every night!"

With that he hurried home as if in a dream.

If it be true that "the most perfect herald of joy is silence," then he must have been happy.

When we got to the Theatre House I could not induce him to taste bite or sup.

He sat and smoked his cigar, and said never a word.

Evidently he had lost himself in the past.

Visions of life's morning, of the time "when Love shook the dewdrops from her glancing hair," had come back to the old man.

The loved, the lost, the distant, and the dead were around him and about him, as with a strange light in his eye, and a strange tremor in his voice, he bade us "Good-night."

Very shortly afterwards, his last regular engagement commenced with me when Salvini failed and left me in the lurch at the Queen's Theatre.

In order to give *éclat* to my *début*, Mr. Phelps did me the honour to play my father in the scene from the second part of "Henry IV.," which, at his suggestion, I had taken the liberty to incorporate with my adaptation of "Henry V."

Those who were present on the first night of that memorable production can scarcely have forgotten the roar which arose, which came back again, and yet again, until the whole audience burst forth into one mighty acclamation, when the curtains revealed to view the war-worn lion of Lancaster, lying beneath the shadow of death in the Jerusalem chamber.

It was a scene and an occasion to be remembered,

JOHN B. BUCKSTONE.

the more so, inasmuch as for some time previous persistent attempts had been made by certain unfledged anonymunculæ to ignore his past achievements, and to underrate his splendid abilities.

It is satisfactory to be enabled to relate that this "grand old man" always remained in total ignorance of these small impertinences, and that the great, generous, large-hearted English public remained faithful to its old favourite to the last.

It is to be regretted that even sundry members of his own profession helped to swell the chorus of his detractors. Some of his friends, myself among the number, were disposed to resent these indignities.

In "the palmy days" at the Haymarket, certain members of the company, excellent good fellows in all other respects, were accustomed to regard all actors out of their charmed circle as "beyond the pale."

Their motto was, "We of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, first—the rest nowhere."

During my flying visits to town, I usually put in an appearance at Suffolk Street, in "Bucky's" room, the green-room, and generally wound up with a call upon "Old Chip" at the "Court."

On one occasion, after the veteran had given me a cheery welcome, he inquired:

"Well, John, you're late to-night; where have you been, sir?"

"To the Princess's."

"Princess's! Where's that?"

"In a place called Oxford Street."

"What's going on there?"

"Phelps is playing Sir Pertinax MacSycophant."

"Sir Pertinax? Ah! I've seen George Frederick Cooke in the part; but Phelps! Phelps! I've heard of that man, but I never saw him."

This was a little more than I could swallow, so, oblivious of the fact that I was "Old Chip's" guest, with more temper than taste I rejoined:

"That's a pity, for if you had seen him you might have picked up a wrinkle or two for Sir Peter Teazle."

It will be remembered that reference has been previously made to the circumstance of Phelps "bolting," when his health was about to be proposed at the Macready farewell dinner. I had often rallied him on this subject, but the truth was, besides being a martyr to *mauvaise honte*, he had a morbid horror of even appearing to exploit himself, and he positively loathed the "showman's" art. Apart from all this, he was so petted and spoiled and coddled at home, that society had few charms and no attractions for him. Now it happened that during my tenure of the Queen's, the Lord Mayor (Cotton) gave a banquet at the Mansion House to the representatives of art and literature, on October 24th, 1876, and Phelps and I were amongst the invited guests.

At first he positively declined to accept the invitation, and it was only when I urged upon him that the position he occupied involved duties and responsibilities beyond its mere barren honours, that he at

length yielded to my persuasions and consented to accompany me.

On this occasion his health was proposed by the Lord Mayor in connection with the Shakespearian drama. His reply was of so remarkable a character that I transcribe it here in full :

"I can say very little to you about the Shakespearian drama beyond what I dare say the greater portion of you already know. But my object in speaking to you to-night is for a very different purpose.

"The Lord Mayor has spoken much of the educational power of the drama. You will forgive me if I speak of myself more than good taste would suggest. If I do so, it is only as exemplifying what is to come after.

"Some years ago I took an obscure theatre in the north of London called Sadler's Wells, and nearly the whole of my brethren in the profession, and many out of it, said it would not last a fortnight. It lasted eighteen years, and my stock in-trade chiefly consisted of the plays of Shakespeare. Now, I determined to act, if possible, the whole of Shakespeare's plays. I acted thirty-one of all sorts, 'from aged Lear to youthful Pericles,' and the thought begotten in my mind latterly was, that if that theatre could be made to pay, as I did make it pay, not making a fortune certainly, but bringing up a large family and paying my way—well, ladies and gentlemen, I thought if I could do that for eighteen years, why could it not be done again? But, mark you, I

found that about every five or six years I had fresh audiences, that plays would bear repeating again and again, and by a peculiar economic method of my own I was enabled to repeat them without any very great expense. Well, if that could be done by me as a humble individual, why could it not be done by the Government of this country? Why could not a subsidized theatre, upon a moderate scale of expense, be added to the late educational scheme, by which children are forced somehow or other into school?

"I maintain, from the experience of eighteen years, that the perpetual iteration of Shakespeare's words, if nothing more, going on daily for so many months in the year, must and would produce a great effect upon the public mind. Moreover, I have at this moment in my possession hundreds of letters from men of all sorts and conditions who came to see me at Sadler's Wells as boys, and who have written to me as men to say that they received their first glimpse of education at that theatre. They have gone on improving in the world, doing this, and that, and the other, which I cannot tell, as I have not time, but I have those letters in my house in proof of what I say.

"If I could find any member of Parliament (which I fear is hopeless), I would willingly devote what little of life remains to me to point out the way in which this could be done, and I would willingly give evidence in the House of Commons to prove the truth of Shakespeare's educating powers.

"I merely throw my bread upon the waters; it may float away and disappear for ever, but I throw out the hint in the earnest hope that it may gather strength, and that it may come back after many days."

Eleven years have elapsed since these memorable words were spoken. Alas! they fell upon deaf ears, and the bread which was cast upon the waters has not yet come back.

No member of Parliament has responded to the appeal, and the House of Commons still remains mute on this important subject.

The National Theatre is devoted to big shows, marvels of spectacular splendour — but in the National Theatre the national drama finds little place.

Individual enterprise and managerial skill have done much, at the Lyceum and the Princess's, to preserve the traditions of the poetic drama; but these are fashionable and expensive theatres, and I fear our poets have to be buttered and highly peppered to induce our upper ten to swallow the dose; but a people's theatre, at people's prices—prices within the reach of all—a theatre which, adequately subsidized, would correspond in England to the house of Molière in France—a theatre devoted to the national drama (by which I do not merely mean the drama of the dead!), where plays could be acted for a run of a week or a month, or even two or three months, and then handed over to the repertory, so that in the fulness of time we might have

consecutive performances of the historical plays of Shakespeare, given as they are given at Berlin and elsewhere—this ought to be the theatre of the future.

The demand for such an institution is more imperative now than it ever was, inasmuch as the centralizing system has utterly destroyed the great provincial circuits, which were formerly training schools for the actor's art, an art which in its higher form of development not only threatens to become extinct, but which will most assuredly perish unless some such means as I have here ventured to indicate be taken for its preservation.

Surely a project of such national importance, not only from its satisfying an artistic want, but considered as a mere educational medium, to preserve at its highest standard of purity and perfection the language which Shakespeare taught and Milton wrote, is well worth the attention of advanced social reformers in the next educational scheme.

The hour has come, but where is the man? Where is the M.P.? Alas! Echo answers, "Where?"

Perhaps when the Repeal of the Union is carried, the Land Question disposed of, the House of Lords abolished, the Church disestablished, the Eastern Question settled, and the Republic proclaimed, we shall begin to think about the necessity of providing a People's Theatre for the People.

The end of my task approaches—and here I propose to paint a crude yet faithful picture of the man and the actor.

Though straight and lithe of motion, Phelps had but a meagre figure. Its slenderness, however, became an advantage as he grew older, and his singularly abstemious habits, combined with his regular mode of living, enabled him to present to the last an elasticity of gait and a singular youthfulness of proportion quite exceptional in a man of threescore and ten.

Certain criticasters, legitimate descendants of the "common cry of curs" who ages ago yelped at great Cæsar's heels because his brow was bald, and who later carped at the wart upon the brow of the mighty Oliver, whose representatives to-day measure Gladstone's genius by the dimensions of his shirt-collar, maintained with "damnable iteration" that Phelps' demeanour was bourgeois, that his eyes were colourless and lacked lustre, that his features were commonplace, and inexpressive; yet even these small fry were compelled to admit that his brow was lofty and arched like the dome of a temple, the nasal column straight and strong, and that his mouth and chin were firm, powerful, and determined.

Though his hands were large-boned, gnarled and even ugly, he made them eloquently expressive, and he had taught every muscle of his body to respond instinctively to the motion of his mind. His voice, which he assured me was originally a piping, weak, reed-like thing, had by constant application been trained into a potent resonant organ capable of expressing every varying mood of tragic or comic art.

That he was a mannerist his greatest admirers will never seek to deny.

It is remarkable that his mannerisms should have assimilated so closely to those of Macready, when it is remembered the two men never met till Phelps was thirty-four years of age, when one would have thought his style was fixed.

At Sadler's Wells all the young actors glided irresistibly into the Phelps mannerism, and at the Princess's, during the representation of that delightful and magnificent spectacle, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," although the Keans did not act in the play, yet when Helena and Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius were lost in the wood, and out of sight of the audience, during the changing scene, their various voices emitted from different sides of the stage such unconscious burlesque imitations of Mr. and Mrs. Kean's most marked peculiarities as to evoke roars of laughter through the entire house. It is unfortunate that on these occasions the scholar's zeal invariably induces him to reproduce the exaggerations and not the excellences of his master.

The most remarkable thing about the Phelps mannerism was the fact that it persistently asserted itself in his tragic assumptions, while in comedy he obliterated it so effectively as to efface his own personal identity.

For my own poor part, the only drawback I ever experienced to my perfect enjoyment of his acting was his mannerism.

Discussing this peculiarity one day with the

veteran dramatist, Palgrave Simpson, speaking of a mutual friend who had not succeeded according to his deserts, Pal broke out:

"X. is too good an actor to be a great one! I admit he looks like a man, and speaks like a gentleman; so much the worse. He ought to growl, or grunt, or stutter, or have a French, or at least a provincial, accent; in fact, he ought to be a mannerist. No man has ever been a popular favourite in my time unless he was a pronounced mannerist. Charles Young was a mellifluous, mouthing mannerist; Charles Kemble was a silver-toned, sententious mannerist; Edmund Kean was a stuttering, spasmodic mannerist; then he got drunk, my boy, and people had the delicious excitement and uncertainty of doubt as to whether he was 'half seas over or wholly gone.' Macready and Phelps were always grim, and growling over their bones; Charles Kean had a chronic cold in his head; Lemaitre was always drunk or delirious (what could be more exciting than that?); Keeley was sleek and sleepy; Bucky was a chuckler, and always loose in the text; Compton was as funny as a funeral; Ben Webster was always imperfect, and had a Somerset dialect; Mathews was Mephisto in kid gloves and patent-leather boots—and nothing but Mephisto (but you know the 'Prince of Darkness is a gentleman,' so was Charley); Ryder was a roarer; in fact, all these great actors owed their popularity to the fact of their being more or less pronounced mannerists. Ergo, your friend Phelps owed a great

deal of his hold upon the public to the fact that he was a confirmed mannerist!"

Mannerist or no mannerist, no actor has left so remarkable a record behind him as Samuel Phelps.

It is no hyperbole to say that the student who had the good fortune to follow him through his eighteen years' work at Sadler's Wells has mastered the entire range of our dramatic literature, or at least all that is worth mastering.

Many actors of our time have surpassed him in various parts, but none of them have ever acted so many parts so well. Although he fell short of the physical and intellectual ideal of some of the characters he essayed, yet he never played one single part on which he did not throw some light. If he failed here, he soared there, and everything he attempted was instinct with brains, life, motion, colour, vigour, and variety.

His Lear, Macbeth, Leontes, Henry IV., Shylock, Wolsey, Cassius, King John, Hubert, Master Walter, Louis XI., and Bertuccio were performances of the very highest order of excellence.

I did not subscribe to the appreciation generally entertained of his Richelieu, while I always estimated his Othello at a much loftier standard than that at which it was popularly appraised.

His Malvolio, Justice Shallow, Bottom the Weaver, Cantwell, Old Dornton, Job Thornberry, and Sir Pertinax MacSycophant were beyond compare, the

ripest, richest, most admirably finished, clearly articu-ed comedy impersonations of this epoch.

Although his Sir Peter Teazle lacked elegance and refinement, yet taken from his point of view (that of a crusty, uxorious, provincial baronet), since the elder Farren no actor of these days (with the single exception of Sidney Davis!) has ever approached him in the part. I well remember, on the occasion of Ben Webster's farewell benefit at Drury Lane, how Phelps' Sir Peter stood out and dominated over all the other characters, always excepting Miss Faucit's Lady Teazle.

It is said that when some one was speaking to the late Sidney Herbert about Mr. Gladstone's mind, the former replied, "Oh, never heed Gladstone's mind; it's his body which amazes me!"

In like manner it may be said that as mere efforts of physical strength, nothing so phenomenal has been seen in our time as Phelps' performance at sixty-five of Othello, Bertuccio and Sir Pertinax. From the beginning of each play to the end, the curtain was no sooner down than it was up again. Everyone of these parts was played at fever heat, and in a rush of fire and flame which held his audience spell-bound.

Nature had done little for him, but art and application did so much that, notwithstanding his physical drawbacks, he became the foremost actor of his time; perhaps I shall not be far wide of the mark when I say that if his reputation be gauged by the nature, extent, and value of his work, he may be justly pro-

nounced the most versatile and accomplished actor, and certainly the most indefatigable manager, the English stage has ever produced.

From the beginning to the end of his career, though he steadily pursued his own aggrandizement as an actor, he had the welfare and the dignity of his profession always at heart. He appraised it at the highest standard, and lived up to it.

His theatre and his home were alike sacred to him as the temple of a god!

His knowledge of men and things (though how he had leisure to acquire it heaven and himself only knew!) was varied and extensive, if not profound.

He had a strangely compounded dual nature. He was a strong hater, but a firm lover; a good friend, but a bad enemy. In the world he was rugged, irascible, jealous, obstinate, and intolerant of opposition; at home he was genial, gracious, generous, and the soul of hospitality.

At home or abroad he was sincere, truthful and honourable—a fond father, a faithful husband, and a staunch friend.

It is easy to be wise after the event, but it is only too obvious now, that, towards the termination of his career, Mr. Phelps would have best consulted his own dignity, and the conservation of his fame, had he said, with his great precursor, "the noblest Roman of them all":

> "But years steal on, and higher duties crave
> Some space between the theatre and the grave."

We are, however, unfortunately only too ready to believe that all men are mortal except ourselves, and he had so long defied the inroads of time, so long resisted the insidious encroachments of ill-health, that he continued to tempt his fate, until he was at last stricken down in harness.

It was during an engagement of a few mornings at the Imperial Theatre that the catastrophe occurred.

He had always a superstitious dread of the word "farewell."

At the time of Salvini's desertion, I urged Phelps to play his farewell engagement, but he refused, alleging that he had dreamt that he should die on the stage if he attempted a farewell speech.

During the performance of "Henry VIII.," while acting Wolsey, while actually uttering the ominous words

"Farewell! a long farewell to all my greatness!"

he broke down, in utter collapse, and the curtain as it slowly descended shut him out from the public gaze for ever.

His presentiment had been realized in a manner he never dreamt of, and the "farewell" he could never teach his tongue to speak the poet had spoken for him.

Congestion of the brain ensued on this attack.

He retired to Epping to recuperate, rallied, came back to town, even contemplated playing a farewell engagement at Drury Lane; a relapse occurred, he returned to his beloved Epping, where he was seized with dyspnœa and violent pains in the side.

Another attack of congestion supervened, which culminated in hallucinations and almost total unconsciousness, until Wednesday, November 6th, 1878, when, surrounded by his children, and in the arms of his oldest and dearest friend, Mr. Henry Plowman, he passed peacefully and unconsciously away in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

His latest medical adviser stated in the *Lancet* that "Mr. Phelps suffered from no organic disease, but simply from a worn-out nervous system, due to over-exertion of his mental faculties, and the wear and tear of his profession."

That no element of romance might be wanting to complete this romantic career, the undertakers lost their way on the road to Epping, and were many hours too late; in fact, they did not arrive till midnight, and it was past two in the morning when they set forth to return to London.

Mr. Plowman, who remained to render the last pious offices, in his anxiety had omitted to provide a conveyance for himself; hence he had to travel to town

"In the dead vast and middle of the night"

seated upon the hearse.

When all that was mortal of my beloved friend was borne to his last resting-place at Highgate, along the whole road the shops were closed, and the blinds of nearly all the private houses were drawn down.

It was a bitter day in early winter, but though the wind pierced to the bones, though the rain fell in one persistent drizzling downpour, thousands and thousands of people defied both wind and rain to do honour to his memory.

When the funeral procession approached the cemetery, every head was bared, every voice was hushed, and a great awe fell upon the multitude.

The most conspicuous figure among the crowd of relatives, actors, authors, journalists, painters, sculptors, musicians, soldiers, doctors, barristers, and clergymen who gathered round the grave was that of the dead man's old partner, Tom Greenwood, who bore his fourscore years as bravely as old memories would let him. Beside him, on either side, stood two of the great actor's oldest friends and comrades, Henry Marston and John Ryder. Both partner and comrades were destined soon to follow after, there, where even—

> "Golden lads and lasses must
> As chimney-sweepers come to dust."

Strangest sight of all was the concourse of women of all ages and all stations who came to pay the homage of their heartfelt grief, and to bestrew his grave with flowers.

It was a day the silence and the sadness whereof were things never to be forgotten by those who witnessed them.

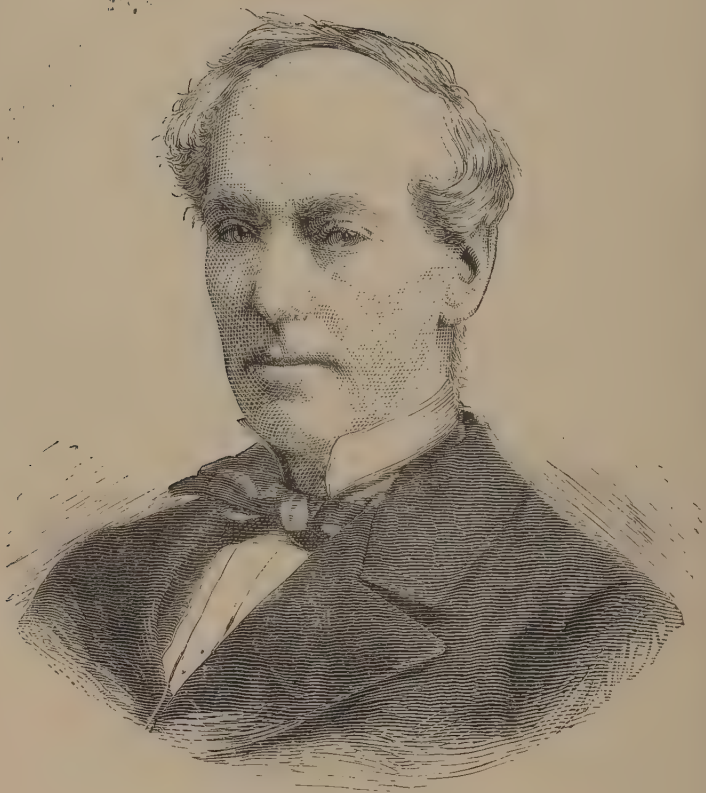
No painted pomp, no splendid pageant, could ever have realized a scene so touching in the tenderness

of its sympathy, so sublime in the depth of its unostentatious sorrow.

"After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well" beside her who shared his early trials and his manhood's triumphs, and now he—

> "Fears no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages;
> For his worldly task is done,
> Home he's gone and ta'en his wages;"

but so long as the name and fame of our master, the poet-player, endure, so long will the name of Samuel Phelps be remembered as "our great captain's captain," as his champion in an age of darkness and depression, of decadence and irreverence; and when the history of the English Drama in the nineteenth century comes to be written by a more skilful pen than mine, the story of his trials, his struggles, and his extraordinary achievements must ever claim a foremost place.



CHARLES MATHEWS, JR.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLES MATHEWS.

THE present generation knew Charles Mathews only as the brilliant comedian, the audacious Dazzle, the delightful *raconteur*, who always contrived to make himself *en evidence* in this "village" even when he was at the antipodes. Thirty years or more have elapsed since he bade adieu to the cares of management. Even then his administrative capacity appears to have been lost sight of in the train of misfortunes which invariably overshadowed his every managerial speculation.

Of this, however, I can only speak from his own words in our moments of confidence, as this portion of his career was long before the period of our acquaintance, or, to be precise, long before my time.

"Gentleman" Hooper, under whose banner I served in my juvenalia, told me that when he was Madame Vestris's manager he engaged Charles Mathews for her at a salary of £6 a week! Six pounds! Why, the veriest tyro of a walking gentleman gets that nowadays.

It was his intention to have made his *début* in the provinces; but his previous appearance in an extraordinary imitation of Perlet (the French comedian) at the Lyceum had been so successful, and his triumphs as an amateur actor had been so considerable, that Liston and Madame Vestris persuaded him to dispense with a provincial ordeal.

The interest caused by his *début* was phenomenal. Every place was taken days in advance of the performance, and the little theatre in Wych Street was crowded with notabilities of the literary and artistic world. Although the *débutant* had a great reception in the first piece (a trifle of his own writing called "The Humpbacked Lover"), it made little mark.

The event of the night was "The Old and Young Stager," a comedy written for the occasion by William Lemare Rede, an actor-author of considerable ability. Liston was the Old Stager and Mathews the Young one.

When they were discovered at work in the stable-yard—the old coachman brushing up his hammer-cloth, and the young tiger cleaning his cabriolet—the house rose at them, and the excitement intensified when Liston took Mathews by the hand and led him down to the footlights.

The enthusiasm thus commenced culminated at the close of the piece, and when the Old Stager told the Young one that he had reached home at last, and that he hoped his friends would be kind to him "for the sake of his father," the curtain fell amidst such a tempest of applause that Liston was over-

ome by emotion, and sank down almost fainting in n arm-chair.

After the play there was a regular *levée* on the tage, assisted at by some of the most distinguished nen of the day in art, letters, and fashion.

At one bound Charles Mathews had leaped into ublic favour, and from that moment to the day of his leath he never lost touch of the public heart.

Previous to his joining the company, thanks to he cultivated taste of the fair manageress and the kill and erudition of Planché, the Olympic had lready acquired a very high reputation for taste, splendour, and refinement, but the accession of Mathews marked a decided step in advance. His facile pen and pencil were from that time forth incessantly occupied in writing bright little trifles or adapting them from the French, designing costumes, etc.

From first to last he was an iconoclast, and one of the most many-minded, modern-idea'd men I have ever met.

"Good wine needs no bush," and the muster-roll of his achievements at the Olympic and Covent Garden speaks most eloquently for his industry and fecundity.

He himself told me the story of the one work which survived his management, and which has become part and parcel of our dramatic literature.

When "London Assurance" was sent in, it was a crude, inchoate, invertebrate sketch. The author was young, and at that time docile. and glad to

accept any hint from the eminent artists who sup plied the unrivalled cast. He was also ready t cut, slash, alter, or turn the work inside out, if i were necessary. In point of fact, although the pla was written by Boucicault, it was edited by Mathew and Co. Apropos, one of the *canards* which obtaine years ago was that John Brougham had collaborate with D. B. in the production. During the run o that delightful play, "Arrah na Pogue," at the Prin cess's, I asked Brougham if there was any truth i the rumour; his reply was, "Not the slightest."

My own acquaintance with Mathews commence in this wise. In my boyhood my friends hac hoped (heaven save the mark!) to make ar architect of me; our principal was a man of pro perty, and had some houses to let. Mathews took one of them. With what wonder and delight gazed on this vivacious gentleman when he firs entered our gloomy office, bringing the sunshine with him! How he talked, and rattled, and jumped about like a parched pea, and what a "swell" he was, with his tall hat curled up at the brim; his high black stock with his collar turned down over it; his frock-coat fitting like his skin; his wristbands turned over his cuffs, and his pink coral links; his primrose kids, his gaiter-bottomed trousers, and his patent-leather boots!

Although I had never seen him before, I had heard of him continually, for his debts and his difficulties, his extravagance and his accomplishments were in everybody's mouth.

A few days after this visit I had to take the draft lease to the Haymarket, where he was then acting.

It was after office-hours, and I might have left the lease at the stage-door; but that would not suit my purpose, as I had a deep-laid scheme in view.

It was five o'clock when I inquired of the porter at what time Mr. Mathews was likely to arrive. Cerberus looked at me suspiciously, and growled:

"Don't know; perhaps he won't arrive at all!"

This was unsatisfactory—the play-bill, however, was reassuring—for there was my hero announced for Dashwould, in "Know Your Own Mind," and Motley, in "He Would be an Actor." Madame, too, was announced for Lady Bell—so I prowled up and down Suffolk Street till six o'clock. At length my patience was rewarded. Just as the clock struck —up drove a brougham, and out jumped the airy light comedian, to assist Mrs. Mathews from the carriage. His back was turned to me, so, approaching timidly, I touched him on the arm. Turning round like a shot, he inquired:

"At whose suit?"

As soon, however, as he saw me, he burst out laughing, as he exclaimed:

"Oh, it's you, young shaver! By Jove! I thought it was a copy of a writ; but come along."

Thus, under his protecting wing, was I permitted to penetrate behind the scenes of the Haymarket.

Had I been alone, I think I should have dropped on my knees, as Hans Andersen did at the theatre in Stockholm.

As soon as we reached his dressing-room, I took heart of grace, and told Mathews "I wanted to be an actor—could he help me procure an engagement?" He laughed again, and asked me "what I would like to play?" With the modesty of youth (ætat fifteen) I replied, "Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth." He dryly suggested "that was rather high-flown to begin with, but" (for I was tall for my years—as tall as I am now—and had put a year or two on my age) "he would try to get me an engagement for Utility in the Norwich circuit" (which engagement never came to hand, by-the-bye).

Then he asked me, "Would I like to see the play?"

"Would a duck swim?"

He gave me his card and dismissed me—the next minute I was in the pit.

In the comedy, besides himself and Madame Vestris, who, in Lady Bell, introduced the ballad of "Rise, gentle moon, and light me to my lover," there were William Farren, the elder—Tom Stuart the growler—Mr. Henry Holl, a very handsome man, who unfortunately had a pair of legs like a parallelogram—had they been straight they would have been as handsome as their owner. Even as they were, they contrasted most advantageously with poor Dashwould's pipe-stems, which were as attenuated then as they were thirty years later. There was the great Mrs. Glover, most superb of comediennes, and there was Mrs. Edwin Yarnold whom I remember chiefly because of her wonderful head of hair, which was as remarkable for its colour

as its abundance. It was red—deep Titianesque red—and came down, literally, to her knees. I'm afraid (I was always a susceptible youth!) I was very much "gone" on that young lady—and although I didn't know him, cherished an instinctive and insensate hatred for Mr. Edwin Yarnold, whoever that gentleman may have been. The comedy was delightful enough, but—"He Would be an Actor"—oh! Mathews never had a note in his voice, but how charmingly he sang "Jenny Jones!"

He was the only actor who ever "sold" me in the matter of a disguise. When that elegant French lady came on, it was in vain I consulted the huge, splotchy playbill (in those days programmes were not): the fair Parisienne's name was conspicuous by its absence. It was in vain I consulted my neighbours of more mature years: they were as ignorant as myself; indeed, it was not until the French beauty lifted up her skirts and made a bolt of it that I recognised Master Motley's Tappertit continuations under the petticoats.

What a capital actor Strickland, the "Dicky Darling," was—or at least I thought so—for of course I knew nothing about it in those days.

The next time I went to the Haymarket was to see the Prize comedy, "Quid pro Quo." The Mathews had thrown up their parts and seceded, and I saw no more of them until I met them at Edinburgh, where they played a variety of their pieces. I think they must have been with us a month from my recollection of their *répertoire*. They did "Used Up,"

"Grist to the Mill," "The Queensbury Fête," "Somebody Else," "Loan of a Lover," "The Golden Fleece," etc. In these particular works they carried everything before them, but Master Charles took it into his head to try his hand at Goldfinch and Young Rapid, both of which were "about as bad as they make 'em," even nowadays.

Although both Mr. and Mrs. Mathews were personally most kind to me, my slight acquaintance stood me in little stead professionally—in fact, it was rather to my disadvantage.

In "Grist to the Mill" I was cast for a somewhat important part—an antediluvian page, who is in attendance upon the Marchioness. After I had tried my prentice hand ineffectually, Madame cut me short, and, *sans cérémonie*, called out to the stage-manager, "Take away this boy and send me an actor." Accordingly I was taken away, and to my supreme mortification George Honey was put in my place.

Mathews tried to console me, pointed out that there was no affront meant to me—that youth and inexperience were faults I should grow out of in time—and as a *solatium* to my wounded feelings, invited me to dine with them on the following Sunday. I was the only guest, and a very pleasant time I had of it.

Unable to gain an engagement in town, in consequence of the feud with Webster, the Mathews were again driven into management at the Lyceum, where I had the good fortune to see most of their admired productions.

Amongst them were "The Game of Speculation," "The Day of Reckoning," "Only a Clod," "Cool as a Cucumber," "Box and Cox," and "A Chain of Events," that huge, cumbrous drama (adapted from the French by George H. Lewes) which occupied the entire evening, and anticipated the sensations which have since made the fortunes of "The World," and a score of pieces of the same class. The stage management and mounting of this drama as nearly approached perfection as anything I have seen, but the productions *par excellence* of this management were those delightful, I may say classic, works of Planché, "The Good Woman in the Wood," "The King of the Peacocks," and "The Island of Jewels," in which, by the way, the first idea (the one which preceded E. T. Smith's memorable "leg of mutton") of the present transformation scene was formulated by the great painter, William Beverley.

One can scarcely realize that the net result of all this enterprise, skill, taste, and liberality should have been continual and unmitigated failure—yet so it was. Mathews himself told me that during the run of many of these justly admired works, supported by himself and his accomplished wife, Fred Robinson, Bucky, and Harley, Bob Roxby, Basil Baker, Suter, Belton, Rosiere, Clifford Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mathews, Patty Oliver, Laura Keene, Julia St. George, etc., they frequently played to ten and twelve pounds a night!

The failure arose, doubtless, partly from the fact

that public taste was not at that period sufficiently educated to appreciate the lighter form of art—(alas! our fathers liked their amusement as they liked their underdone beef and heavy port, with a headache in it)—but principally, I think, because there were no penny or halfpenny newspapers circulating daily and hourly in myriads, and advertising was in its infancy. Astley's, with its everlasting Battle of Waterloo, or the War in India, and Mazeppa; Wombwell's Menagerie; the Wizard of the North, and General Tom Thumb enjoyed the monopoly of monster posters, and pictures on the walls, and the tactics of the showman, as yet, had not been brought to bear upon the profession of a gentleman. Railway trains from the country were few and far between and very expensive. Penny omnibuses, penny tramcars, and the metropolitan railways were not in existence, hence communication from the suburbs to the centre was practically restricted to carriages and cabs, and even these (considerations of expense apart) were not always attainable. In addition to this, the population of the Metropolis itself was a fourth less than it is to-day.

Troubles, trials, and difficulties surrounded this unfortunate enterprise from its first inception to its bitter end. Poor Mathews used to study his parts in cabs; he had to sneak in and out of the theatre amongst the audience to avoid bailiffs and process-servers, and, ultimately, after almost superhuman efforts to stave off the inevitable, he broke down altogether.

At this period, to my certain knowledge, when it was currently reported that he was living in the wildest profligacy and extravagance, he was frequently without half-a-crown in his pocket. In this emergency Mr. John Knowles, of the Manchester Theatre, came to the rescue, and advanced certain sums to stave off the most pressing of his creditors; but "Mr. Mun be done" (Knowles' *nom de guerre*) was a shrewd, hard-headed fellow, and took care to make himself sure.

It was at this time I renewed my acquaintance with Mathews, whom I had engaged at a salary of £150 a week.

His first salutation upon arriving at Worcester was:

"Are you married yet? Then you can feel for me—*she's* dreadfully ill—and I'm dreadfully hard up. You haven't such a thing as twenty pounds about you? Thanks. Now send this telegram. We've visitors at Fulham who must be provided for."

"Visitors?"

"Yes—the Bums, the bold Bums—they must have bread, and beef, and beer and baccy, and plenty of it."

I hope it will be understood that I have cited this illustration of my poor friend's impecuniosity not out of ostentation, but merely as a proof of how much he was calumniated by the lying tongue of rumour.

During these engagements we were inseparable; travelled together and lived together.

Whatever may have been his former tendency to

extravagance, he was now learning and practising economy. He had dropped his valet—dressed and packed for himself, which, with three parts a night, would have been hard work for a younger man. His habits were simple as they were regular and economical. We dined early, taking a bottle of thin claret between us—after dinner, a glass of whisky and water, and a cigar—then (his constant custom) he would adjourn to the sofa, and throw his handkerchief over his head. The next moment he was fast asleep. Sometimes I remonstrated with him about this, as I thought, pernicious habit. His invariable reply was :

"Wait till you are as old as I am, dear boy, and you'll see whether it's pernicious."

He was right. After all, there is a little difference between five-and-twenty and fifty.

He never slept more than an hour, and awoke as regular as clockwork. The first thing he did upon awaking was to write home. I never knew him omit this office even once.

Poor lady ! She was getting near the end of her journey, and his letters were her only gleams of sunshine.

Despite his continual anxieties, what a flow of animal spirits he had, what a charming companion, what a delightful *raconteur* he was ! His manners were as destitute of affectation on the one hand as of pretension on the other. He made no parade of his erudition, or his acquirements—larded his discourse with no shoppy scraps of French or Italian.

He was "all things to all men," and all women; but with all these good qualities he was, beyond all doubt, the most naïvely selfish man (except in his profound devotion to his family, which was paramount to all other considerations) I have ever met with in my life.

His idea certainly was—"greatest happiness of the greatest number; greatest number, number one" —number one being Charles Mathews.

In rushing about the country we encountered some amusing adventures.

One morning at six o'clock we left Lincoln *en route* for Shrewsbury, and came away without breakfast. By the time we got to Nottingham we were famished with hunger, and I got out to order the boys and girls (we were all boys and girls then, Mathews especially!) some refreshment. As I returned, accompanied by the waiters—the one bringing an urn full of coffee, the other a tray full of sandwiches, cups, saucers, etc.—off went the train, down dropped the coffee-urn, the ladies laughed and kissed their hands as they glided away, and I was left dancing a war-dance on the platform. A pleasant predicament truly!

The next train didn't go till mid-day. The company were only booked to Derby. I knew, however, that Mathews would get over that difficulty. As for me, I seemed booked to stay in Nottingham for four mortal hours.

As I strolled down the town, whom should I meet but Miss Patty Oliver and Miss Wadham, Mr. and

Mrs. Frank Matthews, Mr. Bob Roxby and Fred Robinson, who had been acting in Nottingham, with the other members of the Lyceum company.

When I told them of the predicament in which I was placed, by way of chaff, they invited me to accompany them to town *viâ* Syston Junction and Rugby. After a moment's thought I accepted the invitation. The fact was, I knew the ground better than they did. The guard and the driver were kind enough to put on the steam. At Rugby I caught the down train from London for Birmingham. Upon arriving at New Street Station, I jumped into a hansom, and bowled down to Snow Hill. The train was just in motion, but I took a harlequin's leap through the window, and to their intense astonishment alighted in the "bosom of my family." Our saloon-carriage was not locked, and when we got to Wolverhampton three or four objectionable young men of the swell genus wanted to intrude. Poor Billy Belford, however, was equal to the occasion. He whispered to Miss Amy Sedgwick. In a moment's time "La Belle Amy" cast aside her bonnet and shawl and unloosed her abundant tresses, whereupon Belford seized her by her golden locks and shouted, "That'll do, my lady, I've had enough of this;" while she shrieked out, "I am not mad! No, no! By Heaven! I am not mad!"

The swells recoiled, exclaiming:

"By Jove! they are mad, though; mad as hatters, the whole lot of 'em; better give 'em a wide berth."

They gave us a wide berth accordingly, and what

a jolly time we had for the remainder of our journey!

Upon another occasion, upon arriving at Cheltenham, to my astonishment, I found Mathews was *non est.* We had lunched together in Birmingham with Knowles and a friend of Mathews' from the Foreign Office. After luncheon, they went out to see the sights of the town, and we had lost them.

It was now time for commencement, and still no sign of Mathews. There was a splendid house, and the managerial mind was sorely exercised at the thought of "dismissal," which seemed imminent and inevitable.

The play was "Used Up." Now, Sir Charles Coldstream was one of my parts. Except Webster and Sothern (who then called himself Dudley Stuart!) I was the only actor who had the temerity to challenge comparison with Mathews in his crack part. On this occasion, the idea of doing so was the last from my thoughts. So, with my heart in my boots, I went before the curtain, stated the facts, expressed my regret, and proposed to return the audience their money.

Now, in the front row of the stalls sat a bold captain of militia, who had seen me play Sir Charles many a time and oft. To my astonishment and delight, this irrepressible son of Mars cut in with:

"Stuff and nonsense! Play the part yourself, my boy."

The audience accepted the suggestion with enthusiasm, and I retired to get myself up for the occasion.

Unfortunately, I dawdled over the preparations, and before I could get ready, Master Charley himself turned up, with his everlasting cigar (generally a bad one). Without the slightest ceremony he rang up the curtain and walked on just as he was, cool as a cucumber, and I was left lamenting the opportunity for distinction, and what was worse, the five-and-twenty pounds I should have saved by the performance.

Upon another occasion we were at Newcastle-on-Tyne, out of the season, when it was impossible to obtain a band. We managed to get on without the "tootling" for the first four nights, but on Friday we had announced "The Game of Speculation" and "Patter versus Clatter," in which latter piece Mathews needed an accompaniment for his songs. The yeomanry were up for drill, and my secretary had arranged with the commanding officer of the regiment that their band should attend. It appeared, however, that, unfortunately, the gallant Colonel had had a difference with the bandmaster, who refused point-blank either to come himself or allow the band to come.

We only knew of this an hour before the commencement of the performance; but to prevent disappointment, we had some slips pulled off, and posted at the doors, stating there would be no band. Before the curtain went up, I happened to be standing in the prompt entrance writing my letters, when Mathews came and asked me to give him a bill or two. I handed over some printers' invoices, whereupon he said:

MADAM VESTRIS AS APOLLO.

"No, no, dear boy, not this sort of bill, but a bill at three or four months."

I was completely fogged, for up to that moment I had never seen a bill of exchange. Mathews laughed heartily, and said: "Happy youth! Golden age of innocence! You'll know all about bills by-and-by."

He was quite right. I did know all about them before I had done with him.

Whether our friends in the pit and gallery saw the notice about the band I am unable to say, but certain it is, the moment the curtain arose, they kicked up a diabolical row. They would not suffer the performance to proceed, and the performers were hissed off the stage.

One of the actors who was not troubled with any superfluous modesty, as he made his exit, said:

"Gentlemen, I'm neither the leader of the band nor yet the manager; but here's the chief himself, who I am sure will be delighted to explain."

Mathews gave me a little persuasive shove, and involuntarily I found myself before the footlights, while he remained chuckling behind. I soothed my friends in front and "gentled" them down as well as I could, and concluded by saying:

"After all, ladies and gentlemen, I'm sure your principal inducement in coming here to-night was not to hear a band of bucolic torturers of brazen instruments make night hideous with trumpet, trombone, and kettledrum, but to renew your acquaintance with the greatest comedian in the world, and,"

stepping to the side, I caught Master Charley by the wrist, and landing him right in the middle of the stage, I concluded by saying as I retired, "here he is to answer for himself."

This little interlude restored the audience to good temper, and I never remembered to have seen the play go better.

In the excitement and worry of the first piece we forgot all about "Patter versus Clatter;" and it was only at the moment of Mathews going on for the loquacious Captain that he remembered it.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "what am I to do for an accompaniment?"

"Never mind," said I; "never mind, only go on and I'll whistle one." That night, however, his only accompaniment was the hands and hearts of the audience.

This week was a bitter bad one, and would have involved me in considerable loss had it not been for a lucky accident. George Bennett, the tragedian of Drury Lane, Sadler's Wells, etc., happened to be in the town. Now, during the preceding season I had run down from Sheffield to act for his benefit. When he ascertained that, although Mathews was only engaged for five nights, I had taken the theatre for six, he proposed to play "Othello" on Saturday. "You do the Moor," said he, "I'll do Iago for you."

Of course I jumped at the proposal. We did the play, and had an enormous house, which retrieved the week.

Apropos of "Othello"—I remember at this very

ime, Mathews told me that during his engagement with Macready, at Drury Lane, when he (Mathews) played Roderigo, he had "got himself up regardless"—with a beautiful flaxen ringlet wig. At the end of the fourth act, where Iago endeavours to assassinate "the poor brach of Venice," Phelps, by a miscalculation, let drive his sword into that portion of Roderigo's person which he was least able to defend. Although the wound was only skin-deep, it was quite deep enough, and at every stab the poor Venetian squirmed and wriggled in torture.

"At last," said Charley, "the murderous villain directed his attention to Cassio and the other fellows. Now, thinks I, I'm safe; all's over. To my horror, however, presently I heard him exclaim:

> "'Lend me a light! Know we this face or no?
> Alas, my friend, and my dear countryman,
> Roderigo! No—yes—sure! Oh, Heaven! Roderigo!'

"At this moment he placed his foot on my Hyperion locks, and anointed my face with the scalding wax! With a howl of agony I roared out, 'Stow that! I've had enough!' With that, I sat bolt upright, leaving, however, my love-locks beneath the beast's hoof, and revealing a head as bald as a billiard-ball! There was nothing more heard during the remainder of that scene, I promise you, and that was my last appearance as Roderigo."

Many of our flying engagements involved considerable loss, but whether the money was in the house or not, Knowles always exacted prompt pay-

ment. At length we arrived at a difference o opinion, which resulted in my letting him understand that as he held me so strictly to my engagement I should not fail to hold him to his, if the opportunity presented itself. It did present itself, much earlier than I anticipated, and this was how it happened. I had arranged with Mathews to tour the Eastern Counties. Happening to be visiting in Manchester when he was about to commence an engagement at Preston, I ran over to pass the day with him, and to arrange the programme for the ensuing tour. A very pleasant time we had of it. "Proud" Preston is the prettiest town in Lancashire, and we explored every hole and corner of it.

He told me that he had the night previous dined with some local magnate. His hostess was a fine jolly Lancashire matron. She had seen him act in Manchester, and was full of the performance of "The Game of Speculation," in which his "business" of pulling the puppet-strings was a conspicuous feature.

"Eh, Mester Mathews," said the Lancashire lady, "yon's a gradely play. I was main pleased t'other neet."

"Very glad to hear it, madam. May I ask what struck you most?"

"Oh, it was all first-rate; but the best part was where you were *milking the cows!*"

We dined as usual at three o'clock; immediately after dinner, exclaiming, "Excuse the weakness of my nature," he adjourned to the sofa for his accustomed siesta, and I returned to Manchester.

Next Monday I had to act in Stamford *en route* to Norwich, where Mathews had to join us the following week.

The afternoon's post brought me a very insolent letter from Knowles. In those days I fear I was somewhat of Mercutio's mood, and I wrote a hasty reply, recommending Knowles to take himself and the engagement to the place "paved with good intentions." Fortunately for me, my solicitor came down from London that day to see me on important business. After dinner I showed him Knowles's letter and my reply. He smiled benignantly, tore up my letter, and put it in the fire.

"Why, you young idiot," said the astute old gentleman, "don't you know that Mathews is now in Lancaster Castle? Calculating upon your ignorance of this, and your hot temper, 'Mr. Mun be done' has written that letter to provoke a rupture, and get out of the engagement. This is the letter you'll write:

"'DEAR KNOWLES,—

"'Stick to your marble works, and leave me to conduct my theatres. When I require your advice I'll ask for it. Meanwhile, be good enough to intimate to Mathews that I shall expect him at rehearsal in Norwich twelve o'clock Monday next.

"'Yours faithfully.'"

Needless to say, poor Mathews did not turn up at Norwich, and the result was a lawsuit, in which Knowles had to "part" pretty freely. This led to an estrangement; Mathews didn't act in my theatres

for a considerable period, and Knowles swore that I should never act in his as long as I lived. Time, however, is a great healer, and a few years afterwards we buried the hatchet. Mathews acted repeatedly in my theatres, and I acted repeatedly in Manchester.

A year or two after the Lancaster episode he went upon his second American tour, from which he returned with a helpmate in the shape of a beautiful and accomplished little woman, who undertook the task of putting his affairs in order, and who did so. In a very short space of time, Mrs. Mathews extricated him from his difficulties, and he soon began to amass money. During their joint engagement at the Haymarket they acted in "The Overland Route," which, charmingly put on the stage, and admirably acted, went for the entire season, and was, in point of fact, so great an attraction, that it ran for a considerable period after they had left the theatre.

During this engagement, a comedy called "The Soft Sex" was unmercifully slated by the press, yet, nevertheless, was played sixty or seventy nights. I saw it after it had been acted about a month, and was very much pleased with it. Mathews told me, "It would be all right when Bucky had played his part another fortnight, as by that time he would begin to know something about it!"

W. J. Florence, the celebrated American comedian, informed me that, to his thinking, in this comedy Mathews gave the best, and indeed the only faithful,

performance of an American ever given by an English actor.

Next season the Mathewses went to the St. James's with Miss Herbert. Either before, or after this, they gave a dual entertainment in the Bijou Theatre at Her Majesty's. Although altogether the most delightful thing of the kind I ever witnessed, it was a dismal failure, and was speedily withdrawn. At, or about this time, Sothern played Lord Dundreary.

So much has been said about this remarkable performance, that scarcely anything remains to be told; but I do not think it is generally known that it owed some of its success, or at least its opportunity for achieving success, to Mathews's perspicacity.

At first "Our American Cousin" was a disastrous failure, and was acted night after night to empty benches. Buckstone was disheartened, and had resolved upon its speedy withdrawal—when, fortunately, Mathews came to see it. When the play was over, he went round to have a jaw with Bucky, who avowed his intention to withdraw the piece immediately. Mathews urged him not to dream of doing so, but to hold on both to the play and the player, for both were bound to become great successes. Everyone knows how faithfully this prediction was realized; but few people know that in offering that opinion Mathews was throwing himself out of an engagement, inasmuch as Sothern's success kept the Mathewses out of the Haymarket for years.

Upon a certain occasion, when I happened to be

fulfilling an engagement in Birmingham at the Theatre Royal, Mathews was at the Prince of Wales's.

The following week I was going to Lincoln, and had advertised for a few useful young people to act with me at my theatre there.

To my astonishment, I received a note to this effect :

"My dear C.,

"I see that you advertise for a few useful young people; can you utilize my wife and myself? Of course, you know her utility and my beauty. The only difficulty to surmount is our youth, but perhaps we may get over that. Anyhow, if you see your way in the matter, come and look us up, and we'll get as old as we can in the interim.

"Yours ever,

"C. J. M."

This engagement led to many others—not always pleasant ones—inasmuch as the airy young gentleman now fought shy of rehearsals, and as I insisted upon them, we agreed to differ. These divergencies of opinion would, however, lead me into a long story, better told elsewhere.

Mathews' attraction was never a fixed quantity; sometimes he played to great houses—sometimes to most wretched ones. Manchester was always faithful to him, though I have heard the Lancashire lads hiss him right lustily when he attempted a part beyond his reach in "The Day of Reckoning."

This brings me to the subject of his acting.

Elegant, accomplished, finished as he was in everything he touched, he was always, or nearly always, Charles Mathews.

This appears strange and irreconcilable with the fact that in his personation pieces—"He Would be an Actor," "Patter *versus* Clatter," and "Sir Fretful Plagiary"—his changes were not only unique and perfect, but they were totally independent of tremolo accompaniments, or a darkened stage, or any other adventitious aids to illusion. These remarkable metamorphoses were effected in a single instant in the full blaze of foot- and float-light. So astounding were they, that when I recall them I regard with amused disdain the naïve ignorance displayed in the "gush" which has recently obtained in connection with the Jekyll and Hyde transformations.

Of pathos Mathews had not the scintillation of an idea. The squeak he emitted at the end of the first act of "The Bachelor of Arts," when he exclaimed, "My father—my poor father," was the most grotesquely puerile thing it is possible to conceive.

His Charles Surface was a ghastly failure. I have seen many indifferent Charles Surfaces, but none so weak, so inefficient, and so totally destitute of a single trait of the character, as Charles Mathews. Nature meant him for Sir Benjamin Backbite, which he would have acted better than any man of our time.

On the other hand, how admirably he played Puff, Flutter, and Young Wilding! with what ease, what grace, and distinction he carried his chapeau

bras, took snuff, or fluttered his cambric! His taste, too, in costume of this character was exquisite.

His most signal fiasco was Stewart Routh in "Black Sheep"—this was "too awfully awful."

His most signal successes were Charles Coldstream in the first act, which was unapproachable; Dazzle, which was himself; Citizen Sangfroid, which was superb; Affable Hawk (it is no use, Mr. Fitzgerald, your laying down the law about Balzac and Got!), Affable Hawk (bother Mercadet!) was Charles Mathews, and Charles Mathews was Affable Hawk! I wish to see no other; indeed, I never shall see another, for when he died the type was broken and buried with him.

Of all the parts he played, there was one I never missed seeing, of which I never tired, the one which he played as admirably in French as he played it in English. I allude to Plumper in "Cool as a Cucumber." Take all the flattering adjectives I have applied to his other successful creations, pile them together, even then they would not do justice to that matchless impersonation which was altogether the most delightful comedy performance I have ever witnessed.

In dilating upon his acting, I have suffered myself to digress from his persistently fluctuating fortunes.

Although a genuine Dickey Sam, he had ceased to attract at the noble old Theatre Royal, Liverpool, and had played down to atrocious business; hence he changed the venue, and went to the Prince of Wales's, where he crowded the house nightly.

Similar good fortune attended him at the Gaiety, where, prior to his departure for Australia, he played to enormous business.

It was during this engagement that "John Bull" was presented, with the following remarkable cast: Job Thornbury, Phelps; Tom Shuffleton, Mathews; Dennis, Toole: Dan, Brough; and Peregrine, Hermann Vezin.

This was the first time Vezin ever acted with Mathews, which reminds me of their first meeting. Some years ago, when he was playing "The Liar" at the Olympic, Vezin and I were in the front of the house together. Hermann was now coming to the front. Years before, in his youth, he had written repeatedly to Mathews about engagements, and had never received an answer. I persuaded him to come round with me to Mathews' dressing-room, where I introduced them to each other.

"Ha! Vezin!" exclaimed the airy one, "are you Vezin? An actor, too! My dear fellow, I never answered those letters because, the fact is, I thought you were a conjurer, and I did all my hanky-panky business myself!" *

Of course it was impossible to remain serious after this characteristic explanation. From this time forth Vezin and Mathews were the best of friends.

The farewell banquet, at which he himself presided, and proposed his own health, will be fresh in everybody's mind.

* Referring to his burlesque of Anderson the conjurer in "The Wizard of the Sou-South-East by the Nor-North-West."

One would have thought that his voyage round the world would have fatigued him, and induced him to settle down and prepare for his last journey; but that active, indefatigable spirit could not rest, and I verily believe that the smell of the footlights was necessary to his existence.

His last engagement with me led to a final misunderstanding, which I have never ceased to regret, but which was so unique and so amusing that I cannot withhold it.

In the first instance, as I have said, I used to pay him a certainty. Some years after he preferred to take a clear third of the receipts. On these occasions he invariably acted in three pieces a night. Latterly he elected to return to a certainty, and, as it was his farewell engagement, I acceded to his request.

As he had acted with us during the preceding season, and had nothing new in his repertory, I arranged the programme for the week, as usual, save that instead of announcing him for three pieces a night, I announced him for only two.

When his engagement commenced in Leeds I was myself fulfilling an engagement in Glasgow.

Just as I was about to go on the stage, I received a telegram in which he positively declined to act the pieces announced. I telegraphed my manager, Mr. John Chute, to make the best arrangements he could, and to write me full particulars. In doing so he expressed his views intelligibly and forcibly. The booking was bad, and so was Mathews' health. Mr. Chute, however, arrived at the conclusion, rightly or

wrongly, that if Mathews' remuneration had depended on the success of the speculation he would have made no objection to the programme.

On receipt of this communication, I desired Chute to intimate to Mathews that as he had elected to alter the programme, if the receipts fell below expenses he would be paid *pro rata*.

The receipts did fall considerably below the expenses, and Chute deducted a sum in proportion to the loss. Mathews, however, declined to acquiesce in this arrangement, and refused to take his cheque. After the lapse of a month the following characteristic correspondence commenced :

1. "My dear C.,—I am cool, but you are arctic. A month, a whole month, and yet no 'little cheque.' Oh! vere, and oh! vere is my leetle vee cheque? Oh! vere, and oh! vere can it be?' Send it, Barkins, send it to your father.—C. J. M."

2. "My dear M.,—C. tells me he offered you a cheque, which you refused.—J. C."

3. "My dear C.,—Your valiant henchman certainly did offer me a cheque, less £20. 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?' Own up like a man, and oblige, C. J. M."

4. "Dear M.,—I did not know that 'Shylock' was in your repertory. Since, however, you insist on your 'pound of flesh,' I enclose a cheque for the full amount.—J. C."

At the period of this correspondence we were both acting in different parts of the country, and con-

tinually moving about, hence my last letter was crossed by the following:

5. "My dear C.,—No larks—this is serious. Deduct £10 and send me the balance.—C. J. M."

Time passed, and I neither received the £10 nor an acknowledgment of my cheque; so, after a delay of a month or so more, I wrote as follows:

6. "Dear M.,—A month ago, you promised to deduct £10 from the Leeds week. My cheque for the entire amount, with your signature at the back, passed through Beckett's bank three weeks ago, but as yet you haven't 'owned up.'

"Ah! 'were I Brutus, and Brutus, Antony—there were an Antony,' who, sooner than 'take such rascal counters from his friend,' would beseech the Gods to 'be ready with all their thunderbolts to dash him into pieces!'—J. C."

7. "Dear Marc Antony,—I should have thought the conqueror of half the world (you haven't been to America and Australia, you know—more fool you; there's a fortune waiting for you in both places!) would not have been so deficient in magnanimity as to condescend to accept a miserable 'tenner' from a poor struggling young country actor. Since, however, you exact the forfeit, here is your 'half-pound of flesh.'—Shylock, Brutus, Mathews."

8. "Dear Shylock,—Your 'half-pound of flesh' to hand. I accept it with the greater pleasure, since

evidently it comes 'from the spot nearest your heart.' —Yours, MARC ANTONY."

Of course, I was not to have the last word (catch anyone having the last word with C. J. M. !), and the correspondence wound up thus :

"DEAR ANTONY,—I haven't got any heart (never had any), and very little liver! Ha! ha! Had you there, my boy! 'Let the galled jade wince, our withers' (not yours, but mine) 'are unwrung!' Thou last of all the Romans, 'Thine while this machine is to him.'—MARCUS BRUTUS."

P.S.—"When we shall meet again, these present woes shall serve for sweet discourses in the time to come."

Alas! we never did meet again!

As far as accomplishments were concerned, Charles James "was not one, but all mankind's epitome."

It was his boast that, like the travelled monkey, he knew a little of everything, and a great deal of nothing.

The fact was, however, he knew everything.

I forget how many languages he was familiar with. He spoke fluently—wrote admirably—was as facile with his pencil as his pen—sang (as far as his wretched voice would allow him) capitally—danced like a figurante; and, as I have before said, his stage-management (when he chose to take trouble with it) was superexcellent.

Forty years ago he had anticipated all, and more than all, that is done to-day, in regard to taste and elegance in the mounting of dramas of society. At that period, however, he was before his time, and our ancestors cared more for the quality of the joint than the manner in which it was cooked. I have the authority, however, of the late Charles Reade for asserting that no comedy in our time has ever been so superbly mounted as "London Assurance" was at Covent Garden, and certainly the cast remains unequalled.

Only look at the names: William Farren, the elder, Sir Harcourt Courtley; James Anderson, Charles; Mathews, Dazzle; Bartley, Max Harkaway; Keely, Dolly Spanker; Harley, Meddle; and Brindal, Cool; Mrs. Nisbet, Lady Gay; Madame Vestris, Grace; and Mrs. Humby, Pert.

As far as mere manners were concerned, except Mario, Mathews was the most perfect gentleman I have ever met. Whether his gentlemanliness was of the nobler kind, which rises straight from the heart, or the more polished but specious veneer accruing merely from good breeding and the distinguished society amidst which his earlier years were passed, it is idle to inquire now. Certain it is, he was nearly always a pleasant scoffer and a genial cynic. It is equally certain that he was the precursor of the modern fast young man, and the small funereally funny littérateur whose *métier* it is to ridicule and deride everything which is manly, and honest, and true. Though he was the Frankenstein

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on the model of whose monster these amphigamous creatures have formed themselves, I have reason to think that latterly he was by no means proud of his disciples. It could scarcely be otherwise, for he was always a gentleman.

"It is never too late to mend," and one of his most gracious acts of recantation took place a few years before his death, when he wrote my friend Herman Merivale a most graceful and appreciative letter touching that noble work, "The White Pilgrim."

Towards the end of his career it was but too painfully apparent that Mathews' acting days were over, and that the end was imminent, and could not long be postponed. He had, however, always maintained 'twas better to work out than to rust out, and his quick and elastic spirit would not be controlled.

About three weeks or a month before his last appearance, he was fulfilling an engagement at the Gaiety Theatre, Glasgow. Despite the obvious ravages of time, the audiences had been numerous and sympathetic.

On the last night there was a delay in the commencement of the performance. Mr. Charles Bernard, the manager, went behind the scenes to ascertain the cause.

On arriving at the dressing-room he found Mathews lying back in an armchair speechless, and almost totally unconscious. Although the everlasting bad cigar was clutched convulsively at the side of his mouth, his pulse had almost ceased to beat.

The terrified manager sent immediately for a

physician, who, upon his arrival, announced that it was not only absolutely impossible for the performance to take place, but that Mathews' heart had actually ceased to beat!

Upon being urged by Bernard to make some desperate effort to restore the circulation, the doctor forced some neat brandy down his patient's throat, when, to the astonishment of everybody, the Evergreen opened his eyes and feebly gasped: "Hold hard, old man, or I shall be tight!"

For all that he took another dose of the generous and life-giving fluid, with the result that in a few minutes he pulled himself together.

"Get on the rags!" said he to his dresser.

Extraordinary to relate, a quarter of an hour later he was on the stage for "That Awful Dad." An awful dad indeed to those who knew the real state of affairs. The uninitiated were a little befogged by the stumbling, and mumbling, and almost utter inaudibility of the chief performer. Presently, however, he pulled himself together and became quite audible, and warmed to his work. When the *ci devant jeune homme* went frisking about the stage and, kicking up his heels behind him, exclaimed: "Well, well, boys will be boys, you know!" one of his auditors, who had just seen him emerge as 'twere from the valley of death, was not a little horrified by the incongruous contrast.

According to the actor's adage, "Twelve o'clock must always come;" and luckily it came without collapse.

"Doctor Theatre" is sometimes a wonderful physician, and Mathews was better at the end of the performance than at the commencement.

He had to leave for England the following night by the express, and Bernard called in the course of the evening to make his adieux. He had postponed his visit to a late hour, anticipating that Mathews would have remained in bed all day to rest and recuperate.

Upon arriving at the hotel, to his astonishment, he found the airy youth, cigar in mouth, engaged in painting a view of Loch Lomond. He appeared to have taken a new lease of life, and was as lively and frolicsome as ever.

He opened fire with :

"A pretty fellow you are not to have put in an appearance till now."

"I feared you might not be up," replied the other.

"Not up—not up! Why, I was up and out at eight o'clock this morning."

"You don't say so!"

"But I do, though ; I got up because I know you are an early bird. I thought you would have called at ten, and so I painted this little thing for you. As you didn't turn up I've put six more hours' work in it. It's too good for you now, you beggar, so I shall give it to your wife."

Two hours later he was on his way to England.

A fortnight later Death knocked at the door and "stole thence the life of the building."

When the electric wire flashed the news through both hemispheres that Charles Mathews had died in harness in an obscure Lancashire town, it might be truly said of him, as Johnson said of Garrick:

"His death eclipsed the gaiety of nations."

To me the blow came with peculiar bitterness, reminding me of the loss of my earliest friend in the life of the theatre, and of the fact that on the very spot where he had passed away we had passed many pleasant hours in the spring-time of my life together.

Poor Charley! he used to say then, in his gay, flippant manner, "If there are no theatres in the hereafter, the hereafter must be a very dull affair."

He knows all about it now.

CHAPTER V.

MADAME VESTRIS.

This gifted and accomplished woman had been thirty years or more the idol of the public before I met her.

During that long period men and women in England, in France, and in Italy had grown old, while she had ripened to a gorgeous maturity.

Judging of the morning of her life by its meridian, in her youth she must have been supremely beautiful.

I have heard old gray-beards stoutly maintain that when she first burst upon the dazzled and delighted town as Don Giovanni, and long afterwards, during her "Olympian Revels," she was a veritable Phœbus Apollo, and, indeed, the most perfectly symmetrical girl that ever donned the dress of a boy; that she sang like an angel, and danced like a sylphid.

However that might be, on the night I first saw her as Lady Bell, she was the beau-ideal of a woman of fashion. As to her age, she might be any age twixt five-and-twenty and thirty.

Although she was just the height and build of the

Medicean Venus, her high powdered head-dress made her appear taller; the rich brocaded sacque of exquisite cut, colour, and texture, and her grace of motion imparted a remarkable air of distinction, rendered piquant by a certain *espièglerie* which was all her own and was perfectly irresistible.

To this day her scenes with Millamont recall to my mind Cibber's animated description of Mrs. Monfort in "Melantha":

"She pours upon him her whole Artillery of Airs, Eyes, and Motion; down goes her dainty, diving body, to the Ground, as if she were sinking under the conscious Load of her own attractions; then launches into a flood of fine Language, and Compliment, still playing her Chest forward in Fifty Falls and Risings, like a swan upon waving water."

She appeared like one of those dainty, beautiful flowers which charm the eye, but fail to please the other and more potent sense.

Her acting, however, was replete with skill, with grace, with finesse, with culture, with all the artifices of the art, but it lacked sympathy, tenderness, and strength, yet how easy, how elegant, how charming it all was!

Nothing could be more delightful than her Countess of Rosedale in the "Queensbery Fête," or that other Countess, whose name I have forgotten, in "Grist to the Mill;" while her Medea, in the "Golden Fleece," might have been a Greek goddess stepping forth from the stone, after the lapse of dead ages.

Her Gertrude ("Loan of a Lover") and Minnie

("Somebody Else") appeared a somewhat mature countess, going about in masquerade. Yet how charmingly she sang the incidental music!

She had rightly or wrongly the reputation of being haughty and overbearing to her humbler colleagues, but, except upon the one occasion referred to in the preceding sketch, I never found her so.

Her career was a remarkable one, not so much in its vicissitudes of fortune as in its record of triumphs.

One has to go to the byways sometimes to glean information, and I am indebted to the remarkable little book before referred to ("Memoirs of an Old Stager") for the following interesting account of her early life, derived from Madame Mariotti, an attached and faithful servant of the Bartalozzi household for more than half a century:

"Eliza Lucy Bartalozzi was the daughter, or, some say, the granddaughter, of the famous Italian engraver.

"She was born in the parish of Marylebone in 1800.

"Evidently she was a precocious young monkey, for, at five years of age, she was esteemed a capital singer and dancer.

"At that period it was customary at all the foreign schools in London to have a play performed by the pupils, in French or Italian, every Saturday, in presence of their parents and guardians.

"On these occasions the sprightly little Lucy distinguished herself highly, and acquired that perfect mastery of French and Italian destined to be of so much service to her in after-life.

"From childhood she had artistic proclivities, and at fourteen years of age she entered the school of His Majesty's Theatre, and danced in the ballet there for the season. She then went to the Academie of Paris for the winter, and on her return to town became a pupil of the famous ballet-master, Armand Vestris, who kept her hard at work for twelve months, and then brought her out with great éclat as Proserpine.

"Her success, combined with her youth and beauty, attracted the attention of a certain illustrious personage, who had the audacity to attempt to carry her off from under the piazza of the theatre.

"Fortunately, Madame Bartalozzi and Madame Mariotti were at hand, and the one with her umbrella, the other with her pattens, 'went' for the royal rake's head. Eliza made good her flight through the stage-door, followed by her would-be abductor; but, safe within the building, she plucked up courage, and slapped the royal face.

"Although she made a bitter enemy of the elderly Adonis, when the story became known she became a heroine in public estimation.

"At the end of this season, Vestris persuaded her to return to Paris to complete her education, and accordingly thither she went, accompanied by the faithful Mariotti.

"About a fortnight after their arrival, they went out to make some purchases at a draper's on the Boulevard du Temple.

"Like Swan and Edgar's emporium, this shop

opened into two streets. Leaving the confiding Mariotti in the front shop, Mademoiselle Bartalozzi passed out by the back one, and returned in an hour's time—Madame Vestris.

"The union was as brief and unhappy as it had been hasty and ill-advised.

"But one little week had elapsed at their quiet retreat at St. Denis, when a lady paid them a visit, accompanied by two living proofs of the perfidy of the false but fascinating ballet-master!

"The result was an immediate separation. Vestris fled to Milan, and his newly-made wife, who was left destitute in a strange country, fortunately never saw the scoundrel again.

"On her return to England, Madame Vestris, with great difficulty, succeeded in obtaining an opening at Drury Lane with Elliston.

"At that period Moncrieff's burlesque of 'Don Giovanni in London' had a great vogue at the Olympic."

(Here I pause to interpolate the remark that, years after I first met Madame Vestris, I saw her unfortunate precursor in the part of the amorous Don, a poor broken-down old woman, acting in a show at Dundee!)

"Well, 'Don Giovanni' was altered and written up for Vestris, and enabled her to take the town by storm—possibly as much, or even more, by her marvellously symmetrical figure as by her artistic ability.

"At the end of the season at Drury Lane she went to the Haymarket, and for the next three or four

years she continued to play at the former theatre in the winter, and at the latter in the summer.

"Then she revisited Paris, where, for three consecutive summers, she played and sung at the Ambigu and the Opéra Comique.

"During her last engagement, Madame Mara, the prima donna of the Italian Opera, was taken ill, and in the emergency the young English vocalist took her place with the greatest success.

"Indeed, so complete was her triumph, that, at the end of the season, she was invited to accompany the Italian troupe on tour to Milan, Florence, Turin, Palermo, and Naples, in all which places she created a furore.

"On her return to Paris she made the following remarkable arrangement: she played at the Italian Opera on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday in each week; at the Ambigu on Monday and Wednesday, and at the Opéra Comique on Friday and Saturday!

"The news of these extraordinary triumphs produced such an impression in England that the patent houses actually fought for her, and she was enabled to exact her own terms from the managements which, in the first instance, actually refused her an opening at the most modest salary.

"No such engagement has ever been made on the English stage before or since, except in the case of Master Betty.

"She made joint agreements with Drury Lane and Covent Garden, by which she covenanted to play

three nights a week in each theatre—the first three nights at the Lane, and the next at the Garden. From both theatres she drew weekly £100, or, to be precise, her weekly salary amounted to £200."

Of course these enormous terms could not last for ever, and—

"In the winter of 1830 the managements of both the big houses were seized with a sudden fit of retrenchment.

"The *corps dramatique* at each house was a strong, and, it must be admitted, an expensive one.

"Such tried and talented performers as Fawcett, Farren, Jones, Dowton, Braham, Wrench, Mrs. Glover, Madame Vestris, Miss E. Tree, Miss Love, etc., were costly in proportion to their attractiveness, and their employers at Drury Lane and Covent Garden jointly resolved that the expenses must be cut down, if possible. Unfortunately for the carrying out of this purpose, they failed to secure the co-operation of the actors, and one of the first and most emphatic in resistance to it was Madame Vestris.

"She at once threw up her engagement, and on the very same day drove down in her carriage to a little old-fashioned shop in the Strand, next door to what is now the Adelphi Theatre, and sought an interview with the honest tradesman who then occupied it.

"In addition to the business in the Strand, Mr. Scott happened to be proprietor of the Olympic Theatre, which then stood empty.

"Madame soon let him know the object of her visit, and without more ado they came to terms. She went across the street to Coutts', her bankers, returned to Scott with money to pay as much of the rent in advance as he required, and there and then she became lessee of the Olympic.

"Driving round to Fairbrothers', in Bow Street (the great play-bill printers of those days), she ordered her 'announce bills,' and the following day the walls of the Metropolis were studded with intimations that the Olympic Theatre would shortly open under the management of Madame Vestris.

"The next and most important step was to secure as many as possible of the malcontents from the patent houses. In this she was fairly successful.

"The first to give in his cheerful adhesion was the glorious John Liston. Miss Foote, afterwards Dowager Countess of Harrington, also accepted an engagement, and so did Madame's old friend, Mrs. Glover, with her two daughters, Mary and Mrs. Bland, together with the latter's husband, John Bland, a very good stage Yorkshireman, and the father of a long line of Blands.

"Amongst the others who at once joined her standard were the late Charles Horn, the composer and vocalist, and the original English Caspar; William and James Vining, John Brougham, 'Paddy' Gough, and Frank Raymond as stage-manager.

"As for the minor people, the only difficulty was in making a selection.

"The morning following the appearance of the

'announce' bills the stage-door was surrounded by a motley group, composed of almost every grade in the profession, from the 'decayed Hamlet' downwards, all applying for situations. There were heavy fathers, and ditto villains, utility men, chambermaids, chorus singers, ballet-girls, etc., not forgetting the materials for organizing an army of 'sandwich men,' or board-bearers. The names of the most likely of the lot were taken down by Ireland, the copyist of the theatre, and a selection made from the list by Madame herself. Meanwhile, artists and tradesmen were busy at work, both inside and outside the building, getting it into order for opening."

Compared with the wooden barrack built by old Astley, and called by courtesy the Olympic, the Dust Hole was a drawing-room; but under the sway of this potent magician in petticoats, in an inconceivably short space of time the Olympic was entirely metamorphosed.

"Planché and Charles Dance prepared a burlesque-extravaganza, called 'Olympic Revels,' which was to have been preceded on the opening night by 'A Rowland for an Oliver,' had not the Covent Garden management interdicted its performance.

"In this emergency the charming little drama of 'Mary Queen of Scots' was substituted, in conjunction with 'Dominique the Deserter' for Liston, and 'Gervis Skinner' for Mrs. Glover.

"On the Saturday prior to the opening, the liberal lessee presented to every member of the company a week's salary.

"Long before the time of commencement on the night of January 3rd, 1831, the theatre was crowded from floor to ceiling.

"Madame spoke an opening address, the National Anthem was sung by the entire company, then came 'Mary Queen of Scots.'

"The manner in which this piece as put on the stage under Madame's direction was an earnest (well fulfilled) of the consummate taste and completeness which characterized everything produced under her management at any time.

"With a full recollection of all that has been done since by Macready, Madame herself, and Mr. Charles Kean, I believe that no more elaborately perfect 'set' was ever seen on a stage than that of Queen Mary's room in Lochleven Castle in this piece. Every single thing in it was in perfect keeping with the period. The tables, chairs, couches, etc., were all of genuine carved oak, and everything bore the arms or emblazonment of the Stuart. The window curtains, table and chair covers, drinking goblets, candlesticks, knives and forks, nay, even to the very carpet on the floor, were thus marked. The result was a picture which would have borne the scrutiny of an archæologist or an antiquary, though intended merely as a background to the work of the dramatist, and the acting of Miss Foote. The latter, I need scarcely say, gave a strikingly fine representation of the heart-broken Queen, and the piece altogether was a triumphant success.

"Equally so was 'Dominique the Deserter,' in

which Liston hit them hard. Mrs. Glover came in for an ovation in 'Gervis Skinner,' but when Madame made her first appearance — through a trap on the stage—as Pandora, her youth, her beauty, her superbly symmetrical proportions, displayed to the utmost advantage by her classic costume, and possibly by the novelty of her position, procured her a reception so enthusiastic and so overwhelming that she fairly broke down under it, and had to wipe away her tears before she could utter a single word. As soon, however, as she recovered herself, 'Olympic Revels' went like wildfire, not only till the fall of the curtain, but to the end of the season, which, by-the-bye, lasted only thirteen weeks.

"In addition to the pieces already named, the petite comedies, 'I'll Be Your Second,' 'My Uncle's Will,' and the drama of 'Clarissa Harlowe" were produced during the first season.

"During the recess the house was gutted and entirely remodelled, the stage greatly enlarged and improved, while in the auditorium, the gallery was converted into upper boxes, and everywhere else things were made so elegant and comfortable that even luxurious West-enders might have fancied themselves at home in their own drawing-rooms.

"The stage itself was formed upon a principle then quite novel, being elaborately yet simply built of component parts, each of which was four feet in depth from the footlights, and divided into six sections, up which were sent all the properties for

each scene, thus avoiding any awkward changes in sight of the audience.

"The novelty, too, of a curtain parting from and closing in the centre, instead of the old green baize, took the audience by surprise."

(Observe! oh gentle reader, that these ingenious little contrivances, having been lost sight of for the past half-century, have recently been paraded as entirely new inventions!)

"The great feature of the next season was the production of 'The Court Beauties'—the beauties in question being the rather well-known ladies at the Court of Charles II., Nell Gwynne, the Duchess of Portsmouth, Castlemaine, Lucy Waters, and La Belle Stuart.

"The distinct order was that no expense was to be spared in the production of this piece; nor was it.

"The scene-painter, machinist, costumier, and property-men of the theatre were despatched to Hampton Court to take notes of everything necessary from the original paintings deposited in the picture-gallery there. We had hardly commenced work when one of the attendants stopped us, saying that no one could be allowed to copy anything there without special permission of the Lord Chamberlain so we had to return to London with our purpose unfulfilled. This hitch in the business, however was soon removed. That same evening, Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence was behind the scenes, to whom Madame related the circumstances and expressed her disappointment at the result. He replied

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that he thought it would not take long to make that little matter all right, and immediately hastened to his brougham, which was in waiting at the private door in Craven Buildings. 'Dolly' drove straight down to St. James's Palace, saw the King, his father, and then came back with an order bearing the signature of the sovereign, ordering the attendants at Hampton Court to allow us to copy what we pleased, and enjoining them, moreover, to afford us all the assistance in their power. Armed with the royal mandate, we returned to Hampton next day, and on presenting our credentials were received with the extreme of obsequiousness, and, having finished our business, were pressed to stay to dine with the head official at four o'clock, after the Palace was closed to the public. With the material thus obtained we set to work, and in a wonderfully short time the piece was ready for production.

"I should despair of attempting adequately to describe the result of Madame's determination that it should, if possible, eclipse anything of the kind that had ever been done. The first scene was the Mall in St. James's Park, beautifully reproduced from a print of the period of the play.

"The effect of this scene was much heightened by our making use of a passage, fully one hundred feet in length, which led from the back of the stage to Craven Buildings, and by which the Mall was represented going away into perspective, with wonderful appearance of reality.

"On wires hung between the trees were sus-

pended numerous cages with various kinds of singing birds, whose St. Giles's owners managed to make them sing to perfection. On the rising of the curtain this scene used to call forth the most enthusiastic applause, and the demonstration certainly did not diminish when Mr. Hooper, looking the Merry Monarch to the life, came on, followed by his attendants, all in gorgeous and scrupulously correct costumes of the reign of Charles II.

"True to the life, the King was accompanied moreover by a number of King Charles's spaniels. There were twelve in all of these little brutes, and one couple of them alone—named respectively 'Nell Gwynne' and 'Old Noll'—cost no less a sum than seventy pounds sterling!

"This precious pair had a man specially employed to look after them, and were as well off, it strikes me, as those of whom the burlesque bard said:

> "'The pretty poodles were as white as whey,
> The fairies washed and combed 'em every day.'

"Further, in the animal department were a magnificent pair of buckhounds, specially procured from the royal kennel at Windsor—led on by Madame herself in the character of the King's favourite page, the original 'Master of the Buckhounds.' Everything, in short, that taste and art could suggest and accomplish was done to make the scene as life-like as possible, and the result was certainly a great success.

"The second scene showed the fruits of our

labours at Hampton Court. It was a correct model of the room in the Palace there called the 'King Charles' Beauty Room,' the back of it representing the wall with the eight life-size pictures by Lely, each in its massive frame. The sides were hung with beautiful tapestry, which, though now used for the purposes of stage illusion merely, was the *bonâ-fide* article, the real handiwork of ladies at King Charles II.'s Court. For many years it had adorned the walls of Carlton House, and had been now purchased by Madame for a pretty roundish sum, to contribute to the *vraisemblance* of this piece. Nay, more, the curtain which I have mentioned as concealing the pictures while the King and Sir Godfrey were at supper, was the identical stuff, green with gold embroidery, which had for years covered the original portraits at Hampton Court.

"Having been replaced at the Palace by a new one, the discarded article came into the possession of a valet of the Lord Chamberlain, who sold it to us.

"The ceiling of the scene was a painted representation of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and from the centre there hung a massive old crystal chandelier with no less than fifty wax tapers burning in it.

"For the miscellaneous furniture and properties we had searched the chief curiosity-shops in London until the smallest item required was procured in keeping with the rest.

"Such, as briefly as I could well give it, is a

sample of the means which Madame Vestris took to *deserve* that success which, as a rule, she managed to command!"

Here I take my leave of "An Old Stager," whose interesting little work I have laid under contribution for the purpose of rendering a tardy homage to the memory of an eminently gifted and highly accomplished woman.

I have heard Mathews state that the first time he ever saw the lady destined to be his wife, he had lost the use of his limbs, and was carried in and out of the theatre in the arms of his valet.

In December, 1835, Mathews made his *début* at the Olympic; and in July, 1838, he was married to Eliza Vestris. Immediately afterwards they embarked for America.

Prior to their departure, Madame took a farewell benefit at Covent Garden, playing Masaniello (!) in Auber's opera, and her famous "breeches" part of Victorine in "The Invincibles." This performance realized £1,000.

The story of the American engagement, and the cruel outrages to which she was subjected by a certain section of the American public, is a matter of history.

Upon their return from America, the Mathews entered upon the management of Covent Garden. Subsequently, they joined Macready at Drury Lane; and it was after that, that I first saw them both at the Haymarket.

Our subsequent acquaintance has already been referred to.

In 1847 they went to the Lyceum, where for some six or seven years the matchless elegance of their society pieces, and the brilliancy and splendour of the Planché burlesques, gave the younger generation of that day some glimpse of the golden glories of the prime of this distinguished actress.

Apropos of her prime. At the period of their marriage, the quidnuncs maintained that Mathews was about to find in one and the same person a fond wife and an affectionate mother; that, in point of fact, he had married a modern Ninon de l'Enclos.

This was simple nonsense.

He himself told me that he did not make his first appearance as a professional actor till he was thirty-six years of age.

His wife made her first appearance at fourteen; and although, in point of fact, only about three years older than he was, she had been a quarter of a century before the public before he put foot on the stage.

Other ridiculous rumours were afloat about her—notably, the "enamelling" myth.

The truth was, she was a brunette; and in order to make her arms and shoulders appear fair, she was accustomed (as women still are in society and on the stage) to sponge herself liberally—too liberally, as I found upon one occasion to the cost of my dress-coat—with *blanc de perle*.

To the very last her figure was in splendid pre-

servation, although it gradually became more mature. With her increasing years, she adapted herself to a line of parts especially adapted to increasing maturity.

After her retirement, she suffered for a considerable period from one of those internal and mysterious maladies to which her sex are such martyrs, and to which she at length succumbed after untold agonies.

For some years previous to her death, her age was dogmatically asserted to be something between seventy and a hundred, whereas she was actually not sixty when she died!

I venture to hope that this imperfect sketch may do something towards removing from the minds of the present generation of playgoers an erroneous impression as to the culture and condition of decorative art amongst our predecessors on the stage, especially of that particular branch of art which Madame Vestris brought to the very highest form of development then possible, more than half a century ago.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WIGANS.

STROLLING down Parliament Street some twelve months ago, my attention was attracted to a crowd standing round a picture-shop in the window of which was placed the "counterfeit presentment" of a lovely woman—

> 'A daughter of the gods,
> Divinely tall, and most divinely fair.'

My divinity, however, was not clad in the garb of her own sex, but in that of mine. Her costume was of a strange hybrid order, a kind of half Greek, half Zouave jewelled jacket and vest of green and white and gold, with ample Bragobras of bright crimson, from which the majestic and symmetrical limbs gleamed forth bare and beautiful. As I stood and looked upon the picture, although I had never seen the original but once in my life, and then in my earliest boyhood, the impression on my mind was so vivid, and the likeness was so striking, that the sight enabled me in a moment to leap back over a gulf of years.

I was a boy again, sitting in the pit of the Lyceum, gazing upon the most dazzling revelation of youth and beauty these eyes have ever beheld.

I saw forty beautiful women led by one even yet more beautiful, marching to and fro in graceful motion to harmonious sounds.

Were it not for the abominable Royal Marriage Act, this superb creature might be even now the mother of a race of princes—were it not for that iniquitous institution which aids and abets alien princelings in abandoning and repudiating wife and children, and connives at their entering into bigamous alliances; which purchases and pensions morganatic paupers as bridegrooms for children of royal houses, and plants the bar sinister across the escutcheons of honest men and honourable women.

This, however, is not a philippic against a barbarous and immoral institution, but a reminiscence of the Wigans.

The only night on which I ever saw the fair original of that picture was the night on which I first saw Alfred Wigan.

The play was either "The Three Wives of Madrid," or "The Merry Wives of Madrid." The interlude was Stocqueler's "Polka Mania," and the afterpiece Albert Smith's burlesque of "The Forty Thieves."

Of the first piece I remember nothing save the name, and of that I am by no means sure.

"Polka Mania" I remember, not only because Wigan played one Alfred Dorrington and danced

the polka, which was then all the rage—but because many a time and oft afterwards, in my light comedy days, I was doomed to Dorrington, and tried to do the polka, though, to be frank, it more frequently did for me.

In the burlesque the beautiful Miss Farebrother was the Captain of the gallant Forty; Keeley was Hassarac, and made his entrance on a Jerusalem pony; Mr. Richard Younge—a famous tragedian in his time—was Orcabrand; Mrs. Keeley (whom I met the other day at the private view of the Academy, looking as sprightly now as she did then!) was Morgiana; Frank Matthews, I think, was Ali Baba, and Miss Woolgar was the wife of Cassim Baba.

Wigan did the O'Mustapha, and I remember being very much struck with his versatility. In "Polka Mania" he was a fine, handsome, strapping young medical student; in the burlesque he was a grimy, dirty old cobbler. He was supposed to be an Irishman, but I presume his brogue had not arrived from the Emerald Isle, although I believe Bob Keeley reported that it was expected daily. I don't suppose it ever came, for to the last it was of a very dubious quality.

From this night I saw no more, and, indeed heard no more of Wigan till we met in Bristol some two or three years after, when he came down to fulfil an engagement there. It was not "a blaze of triumph," for he succeeded in "ventilating" the house most effectually.

He acted in a very pappy manner in two or three

invertebrate pieces, the very names of which I have forgotten.

The only part in which he really distinguished himself on this occasion was Achille Talma Dufard, in "My Daughter's Début," and even in this part he distinguished himself in an unfortunate manner.

The *raison d'être* of this bright little sketch is made obvious by the title. From the rise to the fall of the curtain the old actor is intriguing to get his daughter an appearance and, of course, a call before the curtain.

On the first night, at the end of the play, in response to the call for the débutante, Wigan was so indiscreet as to come before the curtain alone.

Down came the "bird," and M. Dufard had to beat a hasty retreat; nor were the audience easily mollified—not even when he returned leading his daughter (Miss Fanny Marsh, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the late Henry Marston) before the curtain.

At this period Wigan and I fraternized a good deal, and he confided to me some of his past adventures, and some of his aspirations for the future.

He told me he had been connected in some official capacity with the Dramatic Authors' Society; that he had written two or three pieces; he told me also of his well-known freak in "The Wandering Minstrel" business—and "thereby hangs a tale."

A few years before, a well-known and eccentric M.P. had made a bet that he would take his guitar, disguise himself as a Spanish troubadour, and, while

scrupulously maintaining his incognito, gather a large sum of money. This gentleman won his wager easily.

Encouraged by his example, a number of audacious young bloods followed suit—in fact, the country was inundated with wandering minstrels, of whom Wigan was one of the foremost.

Some time before I met him, I encountered in Edinburgh and Liverpool a little vocalist named C——, who boasted that he was one of the original minstrels, and that he had had "fine high times of it" while cruising round the country.

Some of the boys "pooh-pooh'd" the story of his peaceful triumphs, whereupon he made a bet of a dinner with Walter S——, the tragedian, and Harry L——, the "heavy man," that on one of the off-nights he would go over with them to Birkenhead and gather five pounds in the course of the evening.

At nightfall, six o'clock, they went over by the ferry boat, and ordered dinner at the principal hotel for nine o'clock. C—— then donned his singing garb (a kind of Robin Hood dress), and turned out with his guitar, followed by the other fellows, who mounted guard over him, so as to prevent collusion.

Whenever and wherever he struck up, with a slight foreign accent, "Our Ellen is the fairest flower," or "Annie Laurie," or "The Light Guitar," down came sixpences and shillings galore.

Once, indeed, in a retired square, a buxom domestic of the cookie order shied some coppers at his feet, whereupon he remarked with asperity:

"Ze terms of my vager not allow me to touch coppare; leave im for ze beggar-man. Coppare is not for an hidalgo de l'Espagne."

This dignified address brought down a shower of silver; it also brought his probation to an end.

In less than two hours he had netted something like six pounds, and so the young rascals went back, and "ate of the fat and drank of the sweet" at the expense of the fair maids of Birkenhead, for, of course, although the other fellows had lost the wager, C—— would not hear of their "owning up."

To the best of my recollection, Wigan told me that he had made his first appearance on the stage as D'Arville in "The Spitalfields Weaver," under Braham's management, at the St. James's, where he acted as Mr. Sidney; that he afterwards went to the Mathews at Covent Garden; then to the Keeleys, at the period when I first saw him at the Lyceum.

During our pleasant rambles on Clifton Downs he confided to me that he was a disappointed tragedian, and that the ambition of his life was to enact Hamlet and Shylock—an ambition destined to remain unsatisfied till towards the end of his career, when, I believe, he attempted both parts in Scarborough and Liverpool with doubtful success.

Soon after we parted in Bristol, he joined the Keans and the Keeleys at the Princess's, where he attempted a number of parts for which he was singularly disqualified, especially in the Shakespearian drama.

The truth is, he was utterly unrhythmical, and had no single spark of the *divine afflatus.*

As far as his resources carried him, he was an admirable and accomplished actor—but his resources never carried him with advantage out of the coat and trousers of the nineteenth century.

I prefer not to dwell on his failures, but rather to commemorate his successes, which, as soon as he found a suitable opening, were considerable.

I have before mentioned his admirable rendition of Dufard—but this part by no means stood alone in his studies of French character. His companion pictures in "A Lucky Friday," "A Model of a Wife," but more particularly in Tourbillon in "Parents and Guardians," were distinct and original creations, defined with infinite variety and precision, and intoned with a perfectly pure Parisian accent.

Undoubtedly, however, his greatest triumph in the higher range of art was in the part of "Chateau Renaud," in "The Corsican Brothers;" one of the most unique, perfect, and powerful performances the stage has ever witnessed. I never heard him tell Montgiron in the last scene to prepare his mother for the news of his death without a strange sense of painful but sympathetic emotion.

Then the fight with Kean was a superb exhibition of sword play which I have never seen equalled, except upon one occasion by Charles Dillon and another person, who shall here be nameless.

Kean told me that Wigan was always a fractious and rebellious subject, and he was glad when he left

the theatre. When he did so, and found himself manager of the Olympic, he alighted on his feet, and then commenced a succession of triumphs, which continued through the whole of this short, but memorably successful, management.

Much has been said, and with justice, about the great advantages accruing to a theatre from being placed in a central situation, and no one but an idiot could call in question the great advantages which would surround a theatre placed, say, at the top of Northumberland Avenue, or on the site of Waterloo House.

One would imagine that the mere casual custom of passers-by in such a thoroughfare ought to command a certain nightly receipt sufficient to cover at least half the current expenditure, and yet if we examine the financial result of various houses in this neighbourhood we shall soon find ourselves mistaken.

Within the past fifteen or sixteen years I have seen two Americo-Australian stars—a lady and her husband—play at the Adelphi (in the month of January, too) to a house of £5.

Within the past fifteen or sixteen months I have seen a distinguished American actor, and an excellent actor to boot, received with enthusiasm on his opening night at the Lyceum, yet five nights after he played down to a house of £7.

Ten years ago Salvini played with me at the Queen's to £18, with our expenses at £300 a night.

Within the past two years I have seen an ultra-fashionable theatre, within a hundred yards of

Charing Cross, play to an entire receipt of nine shillings! So that, after all, situation is not everything.

It is a matter of history that Garrick drew all London to Goodman's Fields, and we all remember the phenomenal success of "Geneviève de Brabant" at the Philharmonic. Above all we recollect how for years we struggled in and out of apertures and sliding panels, and up or down passages through which two persons could not pass each other, at a certain fashionable theatre in a most unfashionable locality, until at last the Board of Works awoke to the fact that men and women were not rats to be caught in a death-trap.

Similarly, despite the sordid neighbourhood, the crapulous surroundings, "the ancient and fish-like smell" which impermeated every corner of the building thirty-five years ago—the energy, the elegance, and good taste of the Wigan management attracted all fashionable London to Wych Street, as, indeed, we have already seen Madame Vestris had done more than a quarter of a century before.

Pieces of society have never been better acted or better mounted before or since than "Plot and Passion," "Still Waters Run Deep," and "Retribution."

Apart from Mr. Wigan's own administrative ability, he had a very clever helpmate in his wife, a very pushing, sagacious, active, indefatigable woman, born on the stage and connected with a great histrionic house. As I once ventured to tell her, she was the Lady Macbeth who put the daggers

into Alfred's hands and said, "Do it, nor leave the task to me." He thought he was acting of his own volition, when in point of fact he was carrying out her wishes. She made him and others, too, believe that he was Olympian :

> "Jove in his chair,
> Of the sky Lord Mayor.
> When he nods, men and gods
> Stand in awe."

In the theatres, these good people were august and unapproachable, and woe worth the wight who came "'twixt the wind and their nobility."

They were strict disciplinarians and scrupulously upheld the honour and dignity of their profession, that is, from their point of view, which meant especially their own honour and dignity ; and yet by a strange irony of fate Alfred Wigan was the only distinguished actor of our time who ever was publicly outraged in consequence of his profession.

Upon sending one or more of his children to school at Brighton (I think it was), they were grossly insulted because their father was an actor. Of course, he immediately removed them, and administered a wholesome public flagellation to the offenders.

Besides being past-masters in the arts of stage management, the Wigans were adepts in those diplomatic artifices by which public opinion is directed and manipulated, and they more especially distinguished themselves in the mysteries of what I shall take leave to call backstairs influences upon the fashionable world.

To return to "Still Waters Run Deep." There has never been a scene on the English or French stage, in my time, at least, better acted than the office scene in this piece, between Alfred Wigan and George Vining.

This sketch would be incomplete without the fact being chronicled that Mrs. Stirling, Miss Swanborough, the beautiful Miss Herbert, the magnificently buxom Miss Wyndham, and Sam Emery (one of the best all-round actors of our time), were members of the Wigan company. It was under their auspices, too, that poor, lost, little Robson, whose heart was too big for his puny body, reached the zenith of his genius.

He had, it is true, made his mark under the Farren management, but it was the sagacity of the Wigans in placing him in Desmaret, "The Yellow Dwarf," Daddy Hardacre, etc., which enabled him to "top his bent."

The metropolitan public is the most liberal and sympathetic in the world, hence it is scarcely to be wondered at that when, after four years' incessant labour, Wigan left the Olympic, in consequence, it was alleged, of continued ill-health, all manner of men combined to do honour to him.

He was, however, of too active a habit of mind to be content to remain idle long; hence two or three years afterwards he returned to the stage, and acted an engagement, with indifferent success, at the Adelphi, at the termination of which he recommenced management at the St. James's Theatre. One of his earliest productions was an adaptation of "La

Dame de St. Tropez," which was, if I remembe rightly, the first, or nearly the first, stage work o two briefless young barristers, whom one seems t have heard of occasionally since under the names o Montague Williams and Frank Burnand.

I saw this performance the first night, but it wa only another illustration of that "vaulting ambitio which o'erleaps itself." Wigan's performance of th hero (one of Lemaitre's great parts) was but a tam affair.

I had seen Charles Dillon play the part before and I saw Barry Sullivan play it after, and it is th baldest, most commonplace truth to say that eithe of these distinguished actors could (as Charles Read was wont to say) have chawed Alfred up, and spa him out again, and then have played the part better

To the end of his career he was always makin these mistakes. His utter unsuitability for the her of the Reade Macquet drama, "The Doubl Marriage," was one of the causes of the fiasc which rendered the opening night of the Queen Theatre memorable, and he was the immediat cause of the failure of that powerful drama, "Tim and the Hour," while his melancholy failure as th youthful hero of Tom Robertson's "Dreams," i which John Clayton walked over his head, yielde another proof that nature never meant him for tragedian.

As an actor of character parts, Frenchmen, an above all, of men of the time, in society dramas, H was unrivalled, and will probably remain so.

As a stage-manager, he and his wife (for in this espect, the two were one) are justly entitled to a lace in the front rank.

The first time I met him after we parted at Bristol, was, as I have before said, at the farewell anquet to Macready, at the Hall of Commerce in Threadneedle Street.

Apropos of dinners, previous to my opening in own Wigan did me the honour to propose my ealth, in connection with the drama, at the Theatrical Fund Dinner; and finally—strange to say, the ast time we ever met—we sat next to each other at Lord Mayor Cotton's banquet at the Mansion House, where the duty devolved on me of returning hanks for the assembled managers.

He told me at the time that he was suffering from neurism of the heart, which might at any moment rove fatal; and I well remember how alarmed Mrs. Wigan became at his unwonted excitement in consequence of an unfortunate remark made in Mr. George Sala's speech. I had no idea, however, that he danger was so imminent, and that when we said "Good-bye" that night it was "Good-bye" for ever.

Since these lines were written Horace Wigan has been taken from us.

Doubtless the success of his more accomplished brother allured Horace to follow a calling in which he was destined never to achieve eminence, despite the repeated opportunities which accident flung in his way.

Always sensible, intelligent, and well grounded in

the grammar of his art, he was never an actor—h was always Horace Wigan. He was a capital stag manager, however, and when he confined his atte tion to that department was invaluable.

For some time he managed the Olympic and th Holborn, but he always led me to understand he wa merely engaged at a salary, with a share in profi which, somehow or other, never turned up.

I fear there was not much love lost between th brothers. *E.g.* During the prolonged run at th Holborn of an admirable and apparently prosperou piece, which certainly built up the reputation of on of our most popular actors, I happened to mentio that Alfred had informed me a few days previou that the net profit of his Olympian managemen had realized £14,000.

"Humph! Did it?" growled Horace; "I da say! The devil's children have the devil's luck, an I ought to have a slice of it, being one of the famil —but I haven't! I haven't! Look here, my son and he plucked down a ledger. "Now, don't lo your eyesight, or go off your nut, or swell up an bust! What do you think of that for a week's bu ness in a London theatre with exes at £300?" an he pointed to the entire receipts of the precedin week—a sum total of £14! "Is that good enoug for you, or don't you think you'd better stick your York circuit? I wish to God I was the or anywhere out of this! And that reminds m we'd better go over the road and get a biscuit an a glass of sherry and bitters."

Poor Horace—dear butter-hearted old cynic!—was a man every inch of him—a man incapable of a base or dishonourable action.

He was a graceful and fecund, if not an original, writer. . . . . .

Some of his adaptations from the French would take the wind out of the sails of many of our so-called farcical comedies, but, like many of his compeers, he was a little before his time. Some sow that others may reap—he was one of the sowers.

The critical faculty was strongly developed in him, and had he written about the stage, instead of acting upon it, some eminent authors, and actors and critics, too, would have "caught snakes."

He illustrated in fine form the fact that mere intellectual capacity does not make an actor. Men with not a tithe of his brains have succeeded in obtaining large salaries, and in acquiring distinguished positions, while he for years laboriously earned only a modest stipend, which was rendered still smaller by repeatedly protracted periods of inaction.

In every relation of his life he was an honour to the profession he had, unfortunately for himself, adopted.

Had he devoted to the Bar or the pulpit the gifts which were not adapted to the stage, he might have been a judge or a bishop.

On Wednesday, August 12th, 1885, we left him lying at Hampstead beside his wife. A few trusted friends were there to do honour to his memory.

Probably the most conspicuous person present was his old schoolfellow, Mr. Serjeant Ballantyne, who told me that he had met Horace limping about Margate a month before, little dreaming that the end was so near, the end which came to him as it must come to us all by-and-by.

CHAPTER VII.

BENJAMIN WEBSTER.

MR. WEBSTER was one of the most generally accomplished men that ever put foot upon a stage. He was a singularly versatile actor, a facile and experienced playwright, a splendid dancer, and he "played the fiddle like an angel."

My earliest, almost childish, recollection of him takes me back to the Haymarket ever so many years ago, where I saw him dance the polka (divinely as I thought) with Madame Celeste in a little piece called "The Trumpeter's Daughter." Although then at the meridian of life, he looked a handsome young fellow of five-and-twenty.

Despite the efforts of Julia Bennett, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Nesbitt, "Bucky," Holl, Strickland, and William Farren, how desperately dull and stupid the first piece, the famous prize comedy, "Quid pro Quo," appeared to my unsophisticated mind! "Day of Dupes," indeed! Webster must have been duped on the day he was induced to "part" with £500 for this lump of lead.

Dramatic authors had fallen upon bad times when this prize evoked such keen competition.

Only thirty years previously Mrs. Inchbald was wont to receive eight hundred or a thousand pounds for merely adapting a play from the German, of which language that accomplished lady didn't understand a sentence. A literal translation of Kotzebue's "Child of Nature" was placed in her hands for adaptation, for which she was paid eight or nine hundred pounds, and it was by no means an unusual thing for George Colman to receive £1,000 for a piece; indeed, I think he got £2,000 down in a lump for "John Bull."

A few years after my visit to the Haymarket, I met Mr. Webster in the Edinburgh Theatre, where he was starring with Madame Celeste in "The Green Bushes," "Lioness of the North," "The Woman-Hater," and "The Pretty Girls of Stillberg." He gave himself no airs, and was *bon camarade* with everybody, from the highest to the lowest, with the result that he won all hearts by his amiability and accessibility. I was playing utility or anything I could get, but he was as affable to me as to the leading lady or leading gentleman, or even the manager himself.

Upon his first appearance in Edinburgh, neither he nor Celeste made the impression they had calculated upon in "The Green Bushes." The fact was, the piece had been previously played by the resident company, and first impressions go a very long way. The Miami was a Miss L. Melville, a young

lady whom I remember to have seen once as Margaret Aylmer, in "Love's Sacrifice," on the occasion of John Webster's benefit at the Olympic. I didn't know much about acting then, but I knew that she was a very beautiful, superbly-proportioned woman, and, of course, I thought her awfully clever. The impression she left upon the Edinbronians was so vivid that they didn't care for Celeste after her, and they wouldn't stand Webster at any price after Murray in "Muster Grinnidge." Celeste, however, distinguished herself highly in "The Lioness of the North," though Webster was run very hard in the light comedy part by the astute manager, who (a favourite dodge of his when great people came from town to star) played a character comedy part, and knocked everybody who came in his way out of time.

In certain parts—Old Goldthumb ("Time Works Wonders"), Colonel Damas, Jacques ("Honeymoon"), Simpson ("Simpson and Co."), Trap, ("Diamond-cut-Diamond"), Major Galbraith, Osric, William ("As You Like It"), Modus, Jacob Twig, above all, in Caleb Plummer, Murray was unapproached, and, indeed, unapproachable. He also tried his hand at Falstaff, but "fat Jack" was beyond his reach—the performance, though intelligent and meritorious, was weak-kneed and feeble.

Webster made a great mark in "The Woman-Hater." At this distance of time I can recall two distinct, yet similar, pleasures of memory: Macready's smile in "Richelieu," and Webster's in "The

Woman-Hater." Of the two, I know not which was the more beautiful.

It was, however, in "The Pretty Girls of Stillberg" that Webster made his great hit. We were supposed to be a lot of French lads—students in some military school or college; we wanted a holiday for some especial occasion—I forget what; our *congé* could only be obtained by personal permission from the Emperor, and it was impossible to get at him, although he was in the neighbourhood.

At the moment when we were at our wits' end Ernest (Webster) exclaimed, "I have it, boys!" (he looked a boy himself). Then he walked up the stage—his back to us and the audience—he did something to his coat (he wore a green one), his wig, and hat; the action didn't take two seconds, but when he turned round and faced us, he was metamorphozed into The Little Corporal himself! Not the little, meagre, mangy wretch, all boots and breeches, described so vividly by Madame l'Abrantes; but Napoleon le Grand—at his best and brightest, as he appeared at Erfurt, with a mob of Kings at his heels. The effect of this change was magical and electric. The house rose at it. The much-talked-of transformation in Jekyll and Hyde is not to be named in the same century with this transfiguration.

One evening during this engagement I spoke to Webster of this extraordinary, I might say this almost deified, resemblance to the "Man of Destiny."

"It was a rum start," said he; "a perfect acci-

dent. I never dreamt of it. I was in Paris, without a *sou* or a shirt (my linen was limited to a dickey and a collar!), when I got an engagement as a super at one of the theatres on the Boulevard. They were acting a military drama about the life and death of Buonaparte, and the piece wound up with a glorified tableau of Napoleon and the King of Rome ascending to heaven. As luck would have it, some of the soldier-supers of the Old Guard got it into their heads that I was something like Le Petit Caporal, so I was singled out for the apotheosis. A deuced lucky thing for me! for the piece ran all the season, and I got a very good screw."

The next time I met Mr. Webster was at Worcester, where he came down to act Wright's part in "The Mysterious Stranger," for Madame Celeste's benefit. On this occasion I played the leading part. He invited me to supper after the play. That night he told me of his former extraordinary experiences—how at forty, or five-and-forty, heart-sick, broken down with continual disappointment, he had arrived at the conclusion that he could never do anything as an actor, hence he went into a little bookselling business at Paddington, for the sale of magazines, penny dreadfuls, etc., thus supplementing his small salary at Drury Lane. His resources were so limited that he had to walk to and from Paternoster Row, carrying his bag of books.

One memorable evening when he came home at five o'clock, weary and footsore, he found a notice

from the stage manager, stating that Harley had been taken suddenly ill, and that he (Webster) must prepare to play Pompey in "Measure for Measure" there and then. He had never seen the play in his life, didn't know a line of the part, but desperation nerved him to audacity. He did it, "winged" it, as we say, without a rehearsal; next morning he was famous. The Rubicon was passed, and from that moment he advanced steadily to the front.

Many years after, at a period when most people are thinking of retiring, Webster began to make his mark as a great actor of character parts—commencing with the creation of Triplet—certainly one of the most delightful performances the stage has witnessed. Father Radcliffe followed, in that admirable but unsuccessful play, "Two Loves and a Life;" Carlos, "Thirst for Gold;" Richard Pride, the most awful, many-sided diagnosis of the infinite variety of the phenomena of drunkenness ever witnessed; Belphegor, "The Poor Strollers;" "The Willow Copse;" Tartuffe, etc.

In all these parts, that wretched Somersetshire dialect which clung to him to the last, and a certain hesitation of speech, scarcely interfered with the brilliancy of his execution. Even when he soared to a higher standard as Robert Landry, in my poor friend Watts Phillips' drama, "The Dead Heart," despite these serious drawbacks, Webster's acting of the Bastile scene and the duel with the Abbé de Latour was equal to the very best efforts

of the French and English stage of our time. Apropos of "The Dead Heart," I was so struck with this noble play that the first night I saw it I arranged for the right to act it in the provinces, and ever after found it one of the most attractive plays in my *répertoire*.

The works already enumerated—"The Green Bushes," "The Flowers of the Forest," and a score of others—attest Webster's fecundity and skill as a stage manager. In matters of detail, it must be admitted, he occasionally failed to keep pace with the age; it is, however, remarkable that the airy gentlemen who were always ready to poke fun at the "Adelphi guests" twenty years ago, should have recently dropped the "Gaiety guests" so gently. Certainly in the matter of Bags, Bluchers, and Berlins, the Gaiety guests in "Fedora" bore away the palm from their Adelphian precursors. But, of course, "they manage these things so much better in France."

We had not then arrived at the *petit crevé* amateur actors, and people were not paid at the present rate (more's the pity); but in his time Benjamin Webster paid more money to actors and authors, and behaved more liberally to them, than any of his compeers.

He was too human to be without his weaknesses. He was a little weak on the subject of his acting (we all are); he had also the weakness of gods and great men. Surely 'tis an amiable weakness to admire the sex to whom we owe our very existence, and all that makes life precious.

He was singularly superstitious, too; "would never buy tripe on a Friday," would never start an enterprise, correct a proof, produce a piece, pay or accept a bill, or sign a cheque on this most unlucky day.

Many a time have I sat with him in his room at the Adelphi, waiting for the clock to strike twelve on Friday night, before he would sign a cheque for Saturday morning's treasury.

For years, when oscillating 'twixt town and country, there was a secluded spot in the Albion (known only to the initiated) where, in the "wee small hours ayont the twal," I was always sure to find him.

His age was an unknown quantity.

Paul Bedford, who had known him all his life, assured me, a short time previous to his own death, that Ben was then over threescore and ten. Long after that the young rascal took to himself a charming young wife, who in due course made him a happy father.

Once or twice I ventured to hazard a question about his age; he used to reply in a whisper:

"Hush! speak low, or *He* may hear you—the venerable party with the scythe and the hour-glass. If we let him alone, perhaps he'll pass by without knocking at the door."

On one occasion, "the venerable party" did knock at the door earlier than expected, but Master Ben's time had not come.

The circumstances, which I had from his own lips, were sufficiently remarkable.

During one of my periodical visits to town, I encountered him in the central avenue of Covent Garden Market.

Upon inquiring how he was, he replied:

"As well as a fella can be who has been all but dead, and who has narrowly escaped being buried alive!"

"Well, anyhow, you are alive now," said I; "so come and dine with me at the Tavistock, and tell me all about it."

After dinner, when primed with a bottle of burgundy, he opened fire.

"I've been very ill indeed," said he; "no mistake about that—couldn't eat; couldn't sleep; couldn't drink. I couldn't guess what was the matter. Even C. was puzzled, until at length he put it down to decay of nature. I flatter myself I've astonished that haunch of mutton to-night, yet scarce a month ago I appeared bound for kingdom come. I got from bad to worse, until at last I collapsed, took to my bed, fell into a stupor of sleep, which changed to a trance, which lasted over a week, during which, although I was speechless and motionless, I was perfectly conscious. Dear old C. came to see me two or three times a day.

"Every time he spoke, I tried to answer him; but I could neither speak nor move.

"At last, one night, having felt my pulse, and examined me more carefully than usual, I heard him gasp, 'Poor old Ben!'

"Then he said to my housekeeper:

"'It's all over! You'd better lay him out.'

"I listened in speechless horror, for already I saw myself in my coffin and buried alive; but I was somewhat reassured when the old girl sturdily replied:

"'But he isn't dead! I know he wouldn't have died without saying good-bye to me after all these years. Go—go your ways, doctor, and leave him to me.'

"When C. left the room, she set to work, and laid me out after her own fashion, and this was how she did it:

"She got a bottle of old Irish whisky, half of which she rubbed into my chest; the other half she poured down my throat. The effect was marvellous.

"The generous, life-giving spirit flowed through my veins like fire, restored the action of my heart, which began to beat feebly, then furiously, until I thought it was going to burst. I was half suffocated, until at last I sat bolt upright, and found relief in a severe bout of coughing.

"'I knew you were not dead!' said the old lass.

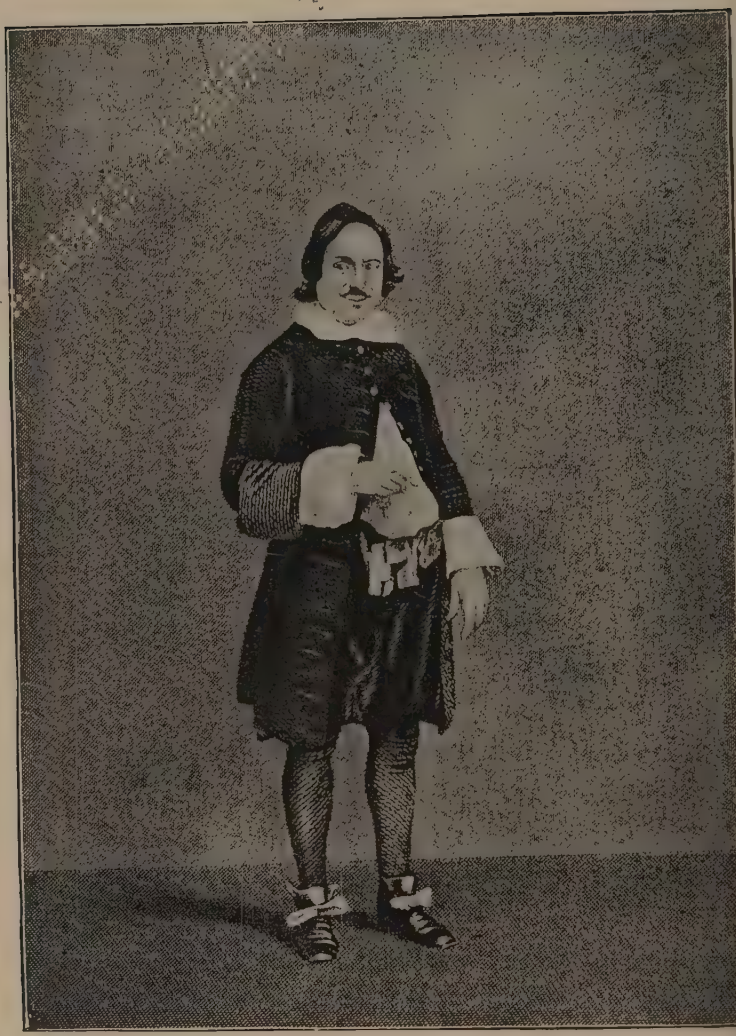
"'Dead, indeed! I should think not! But where's the doctor?'

"'In the drawing-room.'

"'I'll doctor him!' I gasped.

"Then, in spite of her opposition, I struggled out of bed, wrapped myself up in a sheet, and tottered downstairs.

"C. and C., my secretary, were drawn cosily round



BENJAMIN WEBSTER AS TARTUFFE.

the fire, doubtless drinking peace to my memory in copious libations of my best John Jamieson.

"It was about 'the witching time of night,' and when I appeared in my winding-sheet, the poor beggars let out a yell of terror as they sprang to their feet, upsetting the poteen.

"For a moment they were in doubt as to whether I was myself or my ghost, but I soon convinced them of my identity by mixing myself a steaming-hot tumbler of punch, and putting it away.

"Although my recovery was entirely out of accord with C.'s calculations, he was glad to find that, for once in a way, he had made a mistake in his prognosis."

Alas! for poor E. C.! His own end was destined to be infinitely more tragic.

This unfortunate gentleman, for many years senior physician of Charing Cross Hospital, was a man of most distinguished ability.

I have heard experts maintain that, had merit met with its deserts, he would surely have attained the highest dignities and emoluments of his profession; but he had one fatal infirmity, which left him stranded by the tide of time, while others, without a tithe of his ability, walked easily over his head.

Like many other eminent members of his noble profession, his generosity was boundless, and his services were always gratuitously and gracefully given to anyone connected with the theatre.

The last time I ever met him was in John Street, Adelphi, towards the end of '85.

I took him round with me to Garrick's house, on the terrace, to see Edward Leman Blanchard, who was very ill.

C. had never heeded the adage, "Physician, heal thyself!" and though he prescribed for Blanchard's malady, he could not cure his own.

Many years before Blanchard had written a story in which he formulated the idea of a notorious criminal who, while flying from justice, in order to escape detection, steals the body of a dead man, which he dresses in his clothes, and, in the darkness of night, leaves on Hampstead Heath, with a phial of poison beside it. The police believe the criminal has poisoned himself, while in fact he escapes to America.

Strange to say, years after this story was written, the infamous Sadleir had recourse to the very same expedient on the very same spot.

Stranger still, C. happened to be passing by when the body was discovered, and was called upon to make a medical examination.

How far in the last dread extremity this chain of circumstance may have affected his mind will never be known now; but certain it is, the very day after I left him at Adelphi Terrace, he was found dead, with a phial of hydrocyanic acid beside him, on the very seat on Hampstead Heath where years before he had found the corpse of Sadleir.

Peace to his memory!

The worst that can be said of him is, that he was every man's friend, but his own enemy.

Long years after Webster's extraordinary escape from death he retired, and passed a pleasant life of learned leisure with his books (he was an omnivorous reader), his young wife and child, at "The Retreat," opposite Kennington Church.

He was proud of his profession, and always had its welfare at heart; this did not, however, prevent him from making egregious mistakes, the greatest of which was the unfortunate Dramatic College.

No man was more distinguished for kindness and generosity, and no man was more beloved amongst his comrades.

A notable illustration was given in that remarkable benefit of his at Drury Lane, when all the most distinguished members of the profession assembled to do honour to the occasion. I myself travelled four hundred miles merely to assist as a spectator.

Two or three noteworthy and ludicrous incidents occurred during this performance.

First—Nearly all the pit was stalled off, and there was a row from the discontented pittites, which at one moment threatened to endanger the success of the play.

Second—In the screen scene Miss Helen Faucit left the stage through some mysterious opening at the back. Fortunately Charles Mathews found it out before the scene was overthrown, and "gagged" for two or three minutes, until Lady Teazle returned to her post.

Third—When the play was over, poor Andrew Halliday stalked gravely before the curtain, and said,

in the most sententious and funereal tones, "Ladies and gentlemen—er—er—I have the honour—er—er—to inform you that the sum total accruing from this performance—er—er—errors excepted, amounts to two thousand pounds."

Halliday had scarcely got off one side of the stage when Charles Mathews fluttered on on the other, and said, in his most airy manner, "Ladies and gentlemen—er—er—I have the honour—er—er—to inform you that the sum total of the ages of the performers in this play—er—er—errors excepted, amounts to two thousand—er—er—years!"

Last, after the play, Mrs. Keeley had to deliver an address, written by John Oxenford. When the curtain drew up, the stage was crowded with every lady and gentleman of mark in the profession. Webster led Mrs. Keeley forward. Now, the great point of her speech was that, at the end of it, she had to turn round and embrace the *bénéficiaire*. When Webster stepped back, he was surrounded by a mob of ladies; it was a moment of effusion—who began it I don't know, but, alas! the wind was taken out of poor Mrs. Keeley's sails, and her great point utterly destroyed, for lo! and behold, Master Ben was kissing and being kissed *coram populo*, by all the ladies right and left of him. Strange to say, there appeared nothing incongruous or improper in the business. I am sure many ladies who were amongst the audience would have been glad to have given the dear old boy a parting salute, and the younger men only envied the gay young

dog. Upon this osculatory tableau the curtain fell.

Upon how many of the actors on that occasion has the last dread curtain fallen since that memorable morning! First upon the list, in honour and in place, followed grim Sam Phelps, the Sir Peter; next the ever-youthful Charles Mathews, who was the scrape-grace Charles; brusque Sam Emery (Sir Oliver); poor jovial "Bucky" (Sir Benjamin); dry, sententious Compton (Crabtree); and rare old Ben himself, the Snake of the occasion. Some of Charles Surface's guests have followed their Amphitryon to the Elysian fields—notably poor Harcourt, who was a conspicuous figure, brave in scarlet and gold, and who was killed by falling through a trap at the Haymarket soon after, and the veteran John Parry (who accompanied Santley's song). Prominent amongst the crowd in the final tableau stood forth "Honest Jack Ryder" and Andrew Halliday, while last, not least, in the stage-box sat dear John Oxenford, most erudite of critics, most genial of gentlemen. Alas! all gone!—all moved over to the great majority. Their turn yesterday—ours to-morrow.

CHAPTER VIII.

WILLIAM WOOLGAR.

An old gentleman of eighty-four years of age was found dead in his chair at Chelsea some two years ago, who probably will be principally remembered from the fact that he was the father of the accomplished "Bella" Woolgar, so long and so honourably associated with the annals of the Adelphi Theatre.

He has, however, other claims to be remembered. He saw Edmund Kean's first appearance in London, when the obscure country actor burst upon the dazzled and delighted town as Shylock; he saw his last when the fiery and erratic genius broke down in Othello, and said to his son, "Help me off, Charles; I'm dying!" He saw Lucius Junius Booth arise like a star and vanish like a meteor. He saw John Kemble's last appearance as Coriolanus. He saw William Charles Macready open as Orestes, and he saw him close as Macbeth. In the interval he had acted with the great tragedian in London and Paris. He had acted with Phelps in a sail-loft at Torquay, and in the State Theatre at Windsor Castle.

He had been the leading tragic actor, and a popular favourite in nearly every theatre of note in the country; he survived to distinguish himself as Danny Mann in many theatres in town and country; and now he has played his last part.

With his demise disappears one of the last links which connect us with the Titans.

* * * * * *

My earliest and most childish recollection of the theatre dates back to Mr. Woolgar and his charming daughter.

To my unformed mind, this little man, with the face and fair hair of a country boy, was a demi-god, and people who were old enough to form an opinion, and who, indeed, knew something about it, have assured me that he was an excellent actor of the Kean school, whose style and manner he affected.

Years afterwards I met him in my noviciate, and saw him act Master Walter, Virginius, Brutus, Adam, and Tom Coke ("Old Heads and Young Hearts") as I thought admirably.

Those who were so unfortunate as to see Mrs. Mellon in Mr. Burnand's latest triumph, "Just in Time," would have some difficulty in realizing what a charming Helen, Virginia, Rosalind, and Lady Alice Hawthorn she made in those days.

* * * * * *

A little book of mine having attracted Mr. Woolgar's attention, he wrote me, on the strength of our old acquaintance, to request me to overhaul some

reminiscences of his, and put them shipshape for publication.

I found them full of interest, but strung together so crudely as to make greater demands upon my time than I could devote to them ; but he would not be denied, and returned to the charge so persistently, that I was compelled at last to promise to carry out his wishes.

One night he came up to the club to have two or three hours' jaw about the matter.

I had not seen him since the day we met at Drury Lane on the occasion of Chatterton's benefit.

His health was well enough, but his spirits were below par, and he was deeply distressed at the continued indisposition of Mrs. Mellon.

It was no ordinary tie which bound this old man to his daughter, and his grief was piteous to behold.

Subsequently I received several letters urging me to carry out the project he had so much at heart.

At or about this time some over-zealous friend set afloat a report about Mr. Woolgar's circumstances, which found its way into the papers, and occasioned him great trouble and distress, inasmuch as he was under the impression that, apart from the rumour having no foundation, it was calculated to place his family in a false position.

I went down to Chelsea to ascertain the facts. The old gentleman had gone out to take his morning constitutional, and I found him in the vicinity of the

pier. He appeared very much shattered, and I gave him my arm to lean on. As we walked homeward, he told me that this deplorable rumour had caused him to lose three nights' sleep—a serious matter at his age. To make things better, he was suffering from gout in the left foot, which had only attacked him a few days before, and, by the way, it was the first attack he had ever had in his life.

When we got home, he showed me his little treasures—a water-colour sketch of Mrs. Mellon as St. George, two splendid busts of poor Alfred, and a most valuable portrait of himself, painted upwards of thirty years ago, by Waller, a Yorkshire genius. This picture, as a work of art, should be worth a considerable sum.

In his little bedroom was a rare collection of valuable theatrical prints, an etching of Kean (which I had never seen before), a large mezzotint of Miss O'Neil as Juliet, two outline coloured sketches of Charles Kemble as Pierre and Cassio, one of Macready as Virginius, etc.

It was only necessary to mention Kean for Mr. Woolgar to "turn on the tap." "They were none of them 'in it' with the little man," he said. "No one could touch him in Othello, Richard, Shylock, or Sir Giles; but," he continued, "'Mac' knocked him into a cocked hat in Virginius!"

Asking him what he thought of Miss O'Neil: "My God! sir," he exclaimed, "she was youth, beauty, and grace personified. She had little power, but her pathos, and then her voice! it had just the

taste of the potato in it that poor Gus Brooke had—that is, when he had a voice."

"And how about Charles Kemble?" I inquired; "was he the genius that they tell us he was?"

"Certainly not, sir! Charles Kemble never was a genius, but he was a scholar and a gentleman; he pleased the eye, gratified the intelligence, but never touched the heart, never made your back open and shut as this little blackguard" (pointing to Kean) "did."

Thus we chatted away for an hour or more about old actors and old times.

* * * * * *

His last letter, dated June 16, 1886, and written in a very clear, legible hand, runs to this effect:

"DEAR COLEMAN,

"I hope you have not 'cooled' on the reminiscences; they have long been ready.

"Mrs. Mellon still continues in her prostrate condition, which forbids all hope of ever resuming her professional labours.

"I see you are about to publish a life of Phelps. I have had much to say about him, for I cannot think any living being can know so much of his early career as myself, having acted with him in a sail-loft in Torquay half a century ago, and before his engagement at the Haymarket.

"I am very weakly, and I am certain *my bill is due!*

"Hoping your energies will continue with the ctivity of your mind,

"Yours, dear Coleman,

"W. WOOLGAR."

Wishing to dispel his despondency, I took him lown a leader from the *Daily News* apropos of the pproaching birthday of Leopold Von Ranke, the German historian. It was in vain that I pointed out hat this illustrious man, Von Moltke, and the Emperor were much older than he was. "It's no use alking, my boy," replied the veteran, "I can't last nuch longer; I have only two wishes now: to see ny book published, and to die before my daughter—he best, the sweetest, the most angelic of women."

I left him, however, in a more cheerful mood, promising to come down again to pass the evening vith him during the following week.

The night before I was due in Chelsea his "bill vas due," his debt was paid, and when I called I ound that

"Home he'd gone and ta'en his wages."

CHAPTER IX.

RYDER:

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

"I was born in the Isle of Thanet, and my fathe was a river pilot. I was not only an only son, bu an only child, and I suppose I was about as we spoiled as only children usually are.

"The old folk wanted to place me in a merchant' office, and having obtained an introduction to M John Leaf, the head of the great firm of Leaf on Old Change, father, mother, and I came up t town, and presented our credentials. The old gentle man was very gracious, and showed us over th premises. While we took stock of the building, h took stock of me. When we had finished ou rounds, he let out with, 'H'm! I like the cut of th youngster's jib, and I'll find a berth for him!'

"'You are very good, sir,' said my father; 'whe is he to begin?'

"'When is he to begin?' replied Mr. Lea 'When? Why now, sir, now, this very minute!'

"My poor mother, who had never been parte

rom her boy in her life, looked very blank at the lea of this sudden separation. My father was, owever, equal to the occasion, and said: 'Certainly -certainly; much obliged, sir;'—and I was left, here and then, to be initiated into the mysteries of are and tret, and the rest of it.

"That was a bad night for our small family. Iother has often told me that she and father never ept a wink—to be sure, they put up at a coffee-ouse in Bishopsgate Street, and when they got to ed they'd rather a lively time of it with the Norfolk Iowards. Perhaps that might have had something o do with their sleeplessness. For my part, I lay owling all night, and only fell asleep when it was me to get up in the morning.

"I forget the nature of the arrangement made etween my father and Mr. Leaf. I only know that got no money, save what father sent me—that we ever had any holidays—that we worked from morn-g till night, beginning at eight, and never knocking ff till Mr. Leaf himself knocked off. When he alked out of the counting-house at seven o'clock, hich he did pretty punctually, our labours were one for the day. From seven until eleven we were ur own masters. Most of the lads dropped into e neighbouring 'pubs,' to smoke pipes, drink beer, ay billiards, bagatelle, or skittles; but I had a soul oove that, and whenever the state of the exchequer ermitted, I dropped into the pit of Drury Lane or ovent Garden at half-price. The full price was ree and sixpence—half-price, two bob. This sort

of thing made a hole in my slender resources, bu mother was very good to me, and when once passed the magic portals I was in Elysium. It i true my bliss was short-lived—for if any one of u failed to report himself at eleven o'clock, he wa liable to 'get the sack' the next day.

"What sneak turned traitor I don't know, but i is certain that one morning I was ordered into th 'sweating-room,' as we called Mr. Leaf's privat office. As soon as I got in, I saw from the 'angr spot on Cæsar's brow' that something was wrong The governor didn't suffer me to remain in doubt fo a moment, for he opened fire with :

"'So, sir, what's this I hear? You go to th theatre. I don't believe in theatres—they lead t disgrace, destruction, and d———n! Why don you answer, sirrah—do you go to the theatre, or d you not?'

"I stammered out, 'I certainly *have* been to th theatre, sir.'

"'Have been—have been, eh?—and you've th effrontery to own it? I am told, sir, you've eve been two or three nights a week!'

"'It's quite true, sir!—I have been two or thre nights a week.'

"'And you admit it! Do you think I will perm the young people in my employment to walk headlon into the bottomless pit of perdition? No, sir, no —I've my duty to perform. Now, make up you mind to give up the theatre, or give up me. That do, sir; you may go.'

"After this memorable interview, I concluded not
o give up the theatre, but to give up Mr. Leaf as
oon as I could get the chance. At last the chance
ame. Old Kenneth, the agent of Bow Street, got
e an engagement in the country—so, with my
eart in my mouth, I went to Mr. Leaf's room, and
nocked at the door. When I entered the august
resence I 'funked' it a little, and stood till I think
y heart dropped into my boots, and deuce a word
ould I get out, good, bad, or indifferent. At last
e governor said: 'Well—well, what's the matter?
lave you got the colic or St. Vitus's dance? Speak
ut—what is it?'

"'It is this, sir,' I said; 'I've concluded to give
o you instead of the theatre—and I wish to leave
our employment as soon as you can spare me.'
he old gentleman turned purple, and I thought he
as going to have an apoplectic fit; then he gasped
nd spluttered—at last he managed to get out:

"'Well, I never! D——n your impudence!
ere, I say, Ben,' he roared out to the porter,
get this young jackanapes' things down, and chuck
m and them out of the place at once! Away you
o—not another word; get out! Go to the devil!'
was not even suffered to go upstairs, and in less
an five minutes both myself and my things were
erally 'chucked out' on the pavement of Old
hange, in sight of all Israel. I had to pack them
o as well as I could; then I sat down on my trunk
l I could hail a passing hackney-coach to take me
the nearest coffee-house. That was how the

autocratic firm of Leaf and Co. dealt with their dependents half a century ago.

"After this, I went into the country to learn my business, and a precious hard time I had of it, I can tell you. My first engagement was in the famous company of your old circuit, John, then under the management of Downe, who, though he was always 'down' on me, was, I must say, a first-rate 'old man.' I was engaged for walking gentlemen and 'utility' at a guinea a week, commencing at Hull in January, 1838. Having seen all the great people in town, I thought I knew all about it, and I flattered myself that I was going to astonish the wretched country actors; but, by Jove! they astonished me. In the first place, there was the magnificent theatre in Humber Street, with its two tiers of boxes, a grand entrance, and a lobby round which you might drive a carriage and pair, two galleries, a pit like Her Majesty's, two green-rooms, lots of dressing rooms, and a company of forty or fifty first-rate people—in fact, a deuced sight better company than you can find in any West-End theatre just now.

"On the night of my arrival, the play was 'Macbeth.' Creswick was Macbeth; James Chute Macduff; Compton, the First Witch; Downe Duncan; and Mrs. Morton Brookes, Lady Macbeth. The rest of the cast was equally strong. The piece was capitally mounted, and the music admirable. When I saw this specimen of country acting, I felt that there was not much chance of my setting the Humber on fire.

MISS WOOLGAR AS ROSALIND.

"Next night, I 'opened' as Frederick in 'The Wonder,' and I immediately got the sack, which I suppose served me right for having the cheek to think that such a green gosling as myself could pass muster amongst such a crowd.

"Downe was (except William Farren and Murray) about the best old man on the stage, but 'the three C.'s' (Creswick, Compton, and Chute) were the 'great guns' of the concern. The first, full of life and go and enthusiasm, was our leading man; the second was our low comedian; the third (a most versatile and accomplished actor, and a very handsome man to boot) was our light comedian.

"Personally, they were all very kind, but Creswick pronounced my cockney accent intolerable. Compton declared my 'Thanet lingo,' as he called it, utterly unintelligible. Chute frankly, but pleasantly, declared that I was a duffer, while all agreed upon one point, viz., that I should never make an actor as long as I lived! Having arrived at this satisfactory conclusion, they advised me, especially as I had now taken to myself a wife, to get back to Old Change as soon as I could, and play the repentant prodigal to old Leaf; but I replied stoutly, 'I'd see old Leaf —— first!'

"By-and-by the three C.'s began to 'cotton' to me, but old Downe remained implacable. It was getting towards the end of the season when I joined at Hull, so I went with the company to York, where my engagement terminated, and I was left on my beam-ends. At last, when I was about to give it

up as a bad job, I saw land, in the shape of an engagement with the Roxby Beverleys, a family of actors, managers, and scene-painters, about the best they make 'em ; you don't find many such knocking about nowadays, I can tell you.

"There was the old gentleman (and a very distinguished old swell he was), who had been an officer in the army or navy, and who had originally introduced the French plays to London, during his management of 'The Dusthole' (since known as 'The Prince of Wales's'), in Tottenham Court Road. Subsequently he had the Theatre Royal, Manchester ; but ultimately he settled down in the North, where he took Stephen Kemble's circuit, comprising Shields (North and South), Stockton, Durham, Sunderland, and Scarborough. As for the family, for some occult reason, some were Roxbys, and some were Beverleys.

"Sam, a splendid comedian, who succeeded his father in the circuit, was a Roxby, so was Bob, who afterwards became stage-manager at the Lyceum and Drury Lane. Harry ('the Beauty,' so called because he was the ugliest man on earth, yet a great lady-killer, notwithstanding, and the drollest comedian I ever saw in my life, not even excepting Liston !) was a Beverley. So was William, the celebrated scene-painter and inventor of transformation scenes, and prince of good fellows.

"Well, when I got to Scarborough I found my lines had dropped in pleasant places. We were all boys together, and a fine high old time we had of it.

I wonder whether the great painter ever recalls his fishing and boating excursions with the long Kentish lad half a century ago, or the fish we used to catch, and to cook and eat as soon as we caught 'em!

"I began at the bottom of the ladder—played everything—high, low, Jack, and game. At first the work was something awful; but after a while I began to find my way about, got the use of my limbs, and learnt to speak out like a man.

"I was not such an ass as to think myself a great actor. 'The three C.'s' and the boys, Sam, Harry, Bob, and Bill, soon knocked that nonsense out of me; besides, I had my nut screwed on straight, and knew what I was about.

"Pleasant as these times were (and I think they were about the pleasantest I've known, before or since), after two or three years of it I was compelled to arrive at the conclusion that five-and-twenty bob a week wasn't good enough. Then I cast about to see how I could better myself. At last, Mrs. Nisbett came down to star at Sunderland. Oh! what a glorious creature she was! as like that libel upon her in 'Pendennis' as I am to Johnny Toole. My impression is that she had snubbed Thackeray, or perhaps sat upon his nose, which was certainly not a 'thing of beauty.' He was a good hater, and never forgave her. As for me, I would have made myself a door-mat for her if I had had the chance. Anyhow, I was obliging and attentive, and made a friend of the spoiled beauty. Then came Sheridan Knowles, poet, author, and actor, and I laid myself out for

him. He took a fancy to me, and swore that I was a fine fellow, and a first-rate actor.

"One day, while walking to Bishop Wearmouth, he told me I was the best Ferrado Gonzaga and Sir Thomas Clifford he had ever seen. He was an Irishman, you know, and had the national desire to make himself agreeable. If it were not quite true, so much the worse for the truth. I dare say I did Ferrado pretty fairly; but as to Sir Thomas—ah! I had seen Charles Kemble, and I knew that in that part I wasn't fit to brush his boots. All the same, I improved the occasion, so when the poet began to gush,' I said:

"'Ah, Mr. Knowles, it is very kind of you to say these things to me. If you'd only say them to someone else, now.'

"'By jabers! my boy, I'd say them, and twice as much, before the blessed host of Apostles.'

"'The Apostles are all very well in their way, sir, but they won't give me an engagement—though the managers might.'

"'Might, sir! By G— they shall! I'll make 'em!'

"'I'm sure they would, sir, if you'd write a letter about me, and only say on paper half the kind things you say now.'

"'A letther! I'll write you a dozen, my boy, when I get to Newcastle.'

"'I don't want a dozen, sir; *one* would be enough, if you'd only come into this public, and write it now.'

"'With all the pleasure in life, my boy!'

"So in we went, and over a glass of very sour beer he then and there wrote me a gushing letter, declaring that I was the most promising young actor on the stage.

"That night I despatched his letter to Mr. Murray, of Edinburgh, with an application for an engagement.

"By return of post Murray engaged me; and so I got my first start, not by my ability, but by my 'tact.'

"The Edinburgh Theatre at that time occupied a very high position; and the company was first-rate. We've nothing like it here now in this village—at least, not in any theatre I can mention.

"At the end of my engagement, which extended over two years, Mr. Murray (who was distantly related to the Kembles, through his sister marrying Mrs. Siddons' son Henry) was so well satisfied with my industry and attention, that I induced him to give me an introduction to George Bartley, then stage-manager for Charles Kemble at Covent Garden. As soon as I got to town, I waited on Mr. Bartley at the theatre. He received me with very great courtesy, and introduced me to his chief. The old gentleman was seated at his desk when I went in—I can see him now. He looked me through and through, from head to foot, and then commenced:

"'Well, young man, Mr. Murray gives a very flattering account of you. He tells me you played

my own part of Durimel in my play "The Point of Honour" splendidly, and on his recommendation I am prepared to give you an opening. Yes, sir, you shall play Romeo to my daughter's Juliet.'

"The offer took my breath away, and literally deprived me of the power of speech. But the idea of my playing Romeo was too absurd. Evidently taking my silence for consent, Mr. Kemble proceeded: 'Let Bartley have your address, and we'll make all the requisite arrangements.'

"By this time I had recovered myself, and said:

"'Mr. Kemble, any man may well be proud to play Romeo to Miss Kemble, and I am grateful for the offer—but, unfortunately, I can't play Romeo.'

"'Can't play Romeo! Can't play Romeo! Why not, sir?'

"'Because, in the first place, I am too tall, sir.'

"'Too tall, sir—too tall! Look at me!' And the great Romeo that was, rose and rose, till I thought he would rise to the ceiling. I did look at him, and a magnificent and majestic figure he was!

"'Well, sir,' resumed Mr. Kemble, 'we have disposed of the height; what is the next difficulty?'

"'The greatest, sir, is treading in your steps, and being swamped by comparison with the greatest Romeo in the world. Besides, you have a beautiful silvery voice; now, mine is a heavy one! I am more grateful, sir, than I can say, but I'm sure my Romeo would be a failure. If, however, you can offer me any part for which I am qualified, I will do my best with it.

"The old gentleman resumed his seat, ruminated for a moment, and then said to Bartley, 'Bring me the MS. of the new play, George. This young man is hard to please; perhaps we may fit him in "Love's Sacrifice."'

"Five minutes after, the MS. was placed in my hands, and the two gentlemen withdrew for rehearsal, leaving me to read the play. I was delighted with it. It was written by Mr. Lovel, author of 'The Wife's Secret,' and husband of the accomplished Miss Lacy, an actress of some note, and the adapter of 'The Son of the Wilderness.' There was one character especially adapted for me.

When Mr. Kemble returned two or three hours later, and inquired if I had found a part that would suit me, I replied that I thought I might really distinguish myself as Paul Lafont, the villainous rival of Aylmer (Vandenhoff). I was met, however, by the rejoinder that unfortunately Mr. John Cooper had already been cast the part. You remember, of course, that there is a milksop named Eugène de Lorme in this play, who makes love in a small way to the heroine? After a little fencing, Mr. Kemble told me this was the part he wanted me to play, but I replied, 'No thank you, sir; if I have declined to play Romeo, I don't see my way to playing Romeo and milk-and-water, with Romeo very much washed out.'

"This was too much for the gravity of the old gentleman, and he laughed heartily, as he said, 'Ah, I see you know too much! Good-morning, sir.'

And so ended my first and last interview with the last of the Kembles.

"As I left the theatre, whom should I stumble against but Charles Pitt, the tragedian, who had been in Edinburgh with me all the season. He wanted a berth, so I introduced him to Bartley, and he (Pitt) was there and then engaged for Eugène de Lorme, which he played through the run of the piece.

"Being out of an engagement for some months, I made up my mind to write to Macready. He was at that time surrounded by, perhaps, the most magnificent combination of actors and actresses the stage had even seen—so when I talked of writing, my friends scouted the idea; nevertheless, I wrote, referring to Mrs. Nisbett, and in a few days, to my inexpressible delight, I received a reply from Mr. Serle, Macready's manager, desiring me to call at Drury Lane the following morning at ten o'clock.

"I was there to the moment. On my arrival, Mr. Serle told me that the only means by which an unknown actor could procure an engagement was by the perilous ordeal of rehearsing a part before Mr. Macready. 'Would I do that?' 'Would I? I should rather think so; anything to get a chance of an opening at Old Drury.' I was taken round at once, and introduced to Mr. Macready. He was rather grimly gracious, and opened the conversation by remarking:

"'By-the-bye, Mr. Ryder, I think I saw your

portrait as Pierre in Kenneth's window, a day or two ago.'

"'Yes, sir,' I said. Now this was another illustration of my 'tact.' One of our fellows in Edinburgh had a brother who was an artist—he took my likeness in Pierre; and as I thought it no use to have a light and hide it under a bushel, I took the picture to old Kenneth, and got him to put it in his window in Bow Street. If the picture hadn't been put there, Mr. Macready wouldn't have seen it; if he hadn't seen it, he wouldn't have given me a hearing, and the chances are I should never have got to Drury Lane.

"Anyhow, 'Mac' continued: 'Will you rehearse Pierre?'

"'Certainly, sir, with pleasure,' I replied.

"'Very well, then. Wilmot,' he said (addressing the prompter, an eccentric old man with a wooden leg), 'you have the prompt-book. Ellis' (this was Wilmot's assistant), 'take Mr. Ryder round to the saloon—we'll join you there.'

"As Mr. George Ellis led me round, he graciously vouchsafed to inform me, in the pleasantest manner possible, that during the present season exactly a dozen people had rehearsed to Mr. Macready—and every one of them had failed. This was reassuring, but I replied with the modesty of youth, 'There's luck in odd numbers! If you're going to read Jaffier, don't mumble; speak up, and let me hear you. Give me the speech which precedes my cue in full, so that I may have an opportunity of making an entrance.'

"When we got to the saloon, the great man was there before us, with his satellites, Serle and Wilmot, wooden leg and all. 'Now then,' cried 'the eminent,' 'Mr. Ryder, let's have a taste of your quality.'

"Nerving myself for the task, and cocking my hat over my eye, I swaggered on, and to the best of my ability did justice to the 'dashing, gay, bold-faced villain.'

"At the end of my first scene, Macready came springing down the room, exclaiming 'Capital! Capital! But I'd rather see you go through the remainder of the part on the stage, if you don't mind!'

"'Not in the least, sir,' said I, gaining courage—so round I went to the stage with Ellis, while Macready, Serle, and Wilmot went into the boxes. Then we had a pair of flats shoved on in the first grooves, and the 'tormentors' set at the sides, so as to shut out interruptions.

"It was now eleven o'clock—the hour fixed for the commencement of the rehearsal. By a remarkable coincidence, this very play, 'Venice Preserved,' was to be acted that very night, with Helen Faucit for Belvidera, Anderson for Jaffier, and Phelps for Pierre. Phelps, by-the-bye, was somewhat taken aback when he arrived, to find 'a young man from the country' spouting his part.

"My rehearsal, I am happy to say, was sufficiently satisfactory to induce Mr. Macready to give me an engagement, and when I quitted the theatre I had my articles of agreement for the ensuing season in my pocket, and a 'free admission for two' during

every night for the remainder of the current season.

"I had a hard battle to hold out till the opening, but at last the time came—Saturday, October 1st, 1842, a memorable night for me. We opened with 'As You Like It.' Such a cast! Only think of the names! There never was anything like it before or since, or ever will be—it is impossible.

"There was 'Mac' himself, for the melancholy Jacques. The three brothers, Orlando, Oliver, and Jacques de Bois, were Jim Anderson, then the most magnificent juvenile actor that ever walked upon the stage; Elliot Graham, a giant, and a deuced good actor—in fact, a principal tragedian; and Harry Lynne, another tragedian. Phelps was the Adam—everyone knows what he was. George Bennett, another first-rate tragedian, was Duke Frederick. Le Beau was Hudson, the Irish comedian from Dublin—a fine big, handsome fellow, and one of the best light comedians I ever saw. Amongst the tragedians we had only one little chap, Elton, who played the first Lord; but if 'mind is the standard of the man,' he was as big as any of us, for he was a wonderfully good actor. Poor fellow! You remember—he was lost in the wreck of the *Pegasus*. Keeley was the Touchstone, and Compton the William. I forget who played Sylvius, but Billy Bennett was Corin, and Howell was Charles the Wrestler. Rosalind was the beautiful Nisbett (to whose friendly offices, I shrewdly suspect, I was indebted for a hearing); Cœlia, Mrs. Stirling, then as

fine a woman as ever stepped in shoe-leather; Phœbe, Miss Philips; and Audrey, Mrs. Keeley, who was as full of mischief as an egg is full of meat; but, by Jove! she could act any mortal thing. I believe she'd have tackled Lady Macbeth, or even Richard III., in an emergency. Then the music——there were Miss Romer for Cupid, in 'The Masque;' and Harry Phillips ('The Light of Other Days' and 'When Time hath Bereft Thee' Phillips) for the second Lord; there was little Allen, a charming tenor, for Amiens; there was Stretton (the original Devilshoof in the 'Bohemian Girl'), and there were Sims Reeves and Priscilla Horton, for the concerted pieces. As for the scenery, it was Clarkson Stansfield's. Except Beverley, there is not a scene-painter living fit to hold a candle to Stansfield. I was the Banished Duke. I should imagine that I was the only duffer amongst the whole lot—but, thank God! 'Mac' didn't think so, for at the end of my first scene he took me by the hand and said, 'Mr. Ryder, you shall never play a worse part than this while you are in this theatre, and as often as it is possible I shall take care that you play a better one.' And he kept his word.

"When I went to Treasury on Saturday, the Treasurer handed me a sum considerably in excess of the modest salary for which I was engaged.

"'Sir,' said I, 'you've made a mistake—this is not my salary. I wish to God it was!'

"'No, sir,' he replied; 'I have made no mistake. I am merely carrying out Mr. Macready's orders.'

"Thus commenced my connection with that great actor forty-two years ago, and I remained with him till he retired from management. When he went to America I was his right-hand man, and took a good deal of the rough work off his hands. You know I was with him in Edinburgh when the Forrest row began—for it was then I first met you, my lad; you were only a stripling then—and I was with him in New York when it ended in bloodshed; I may almost say I was with him to the last. No, not quite; but that was my fault, not his.

"You remember my telling you how I parted with old Leaf? Well, when I was with Charles Kean at the Princess's, playing Macbeth and 'Marco Spada' (a long three-act romantic drama) night after night, with credit to myself and to the satisfaction of the public, for three weeks consecutively, at the princely remuneration of five pounds a week (nowadays fellows get ten and twenty pounds a week for playing walking gentlemen, and turn up their noses at that!), my salary didn't run to cabs, so I had to travel by the 'bus. My managers now (good luck, say I, to the Gattis!) stand me a brougham. In those days I should as soon have thought of getting into a bishopric as a brougham! Well, every morning regularly I used to meet old Mr. Leaf in the Streatham 'bus on my way to town. He had retired from business, and was currently believed to be worth a million of money, but he still stuck to the 'bus. It had been good enough for him for many a year, and it was good enough to last the remainder of his

time. The old gentleman was so little altered, that I had no difficulty in recognising him; but I had grown from a lean gawky stripling into a great leathery man, and he didn't know me from Adam. One morning I made up my mind to renew our acquaintance, so I reminded him who I was. He had no recollection whatever of me; but at last, when I told him about my trunk being 'chucked out' on the flags at Old Change, he recalled the circumstances, but without the slightest compunction; on the contrary, he thought it a capital joke, and as I was now coming to the front, even condescended to patronizingly congratulate me on my promotion.

"Now just see how things change! It was in 1838 when I made my ignominious exit for the sin of going to the theatre. In this present year of grace, 1884—that is to say, nearly half a century later—the amateur corps of Leaf and Co. is one of the most famous in the City of London, and the son of the head of the firm is principal actor and stage manager!

"Yes, I think people are not quite so pig-headed as they were half a century ago. But there, I think you've had enough of this yarn.

"My mother—bless her heart!—is alive and hearty, and when I passed last Christmas with her at Margate, where she has lived ever since she was born, the dear old soul had never had a day's illness in her life.

"For my part, no 'd——d good-natured friend' shall ever have a chance of saying of Jack Ryder,

'Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage,' so I shall take my farewell at Drury Lane on my seventieth birthday—on the fifth of April next. 'Gussy' is a brick!—he has given me the use of the theatre. It was at Old Drury my star rose; there it shall set. All the boys and girls have promised to help, and I know that the dear old British public will come to give me a hand, and a God-speed at parting. After that I shall lie up in dock, except when I occasionally pilot some young craft off the stocks; but I hope to live many a year to come, to act my young encounters o'er again, here and elsewhere, with my old comrades."

* * * * * *

The above sketch, as far as my memory will serve, is a faithful transcript of a narrative related to me by Mr. Ryder one night at the Club in February, 1884.

Subsequently, we frequently discussed a project for preparing his memoirs for publication, but something always occurred to prevent our setting to work.

It was not until the evening of Friday, February 13th, 1885, that I read the foregoing fragment to him in his dressing-room at the Adelphi Theatre.

He was delighted, and paced the little room to and fro in quite a pleasant and unwonted excitement.

The reader who has seen (and who has not?) "In the Ranks" will doubtless recollect that after the first act he had a long wait of a couple of hours,

until the end of the play. He told me, with great glee, that he had induced the author to kill him off, and have done with him altogether, in the first act of the new play ("The Last Chance") which was then in preparation.

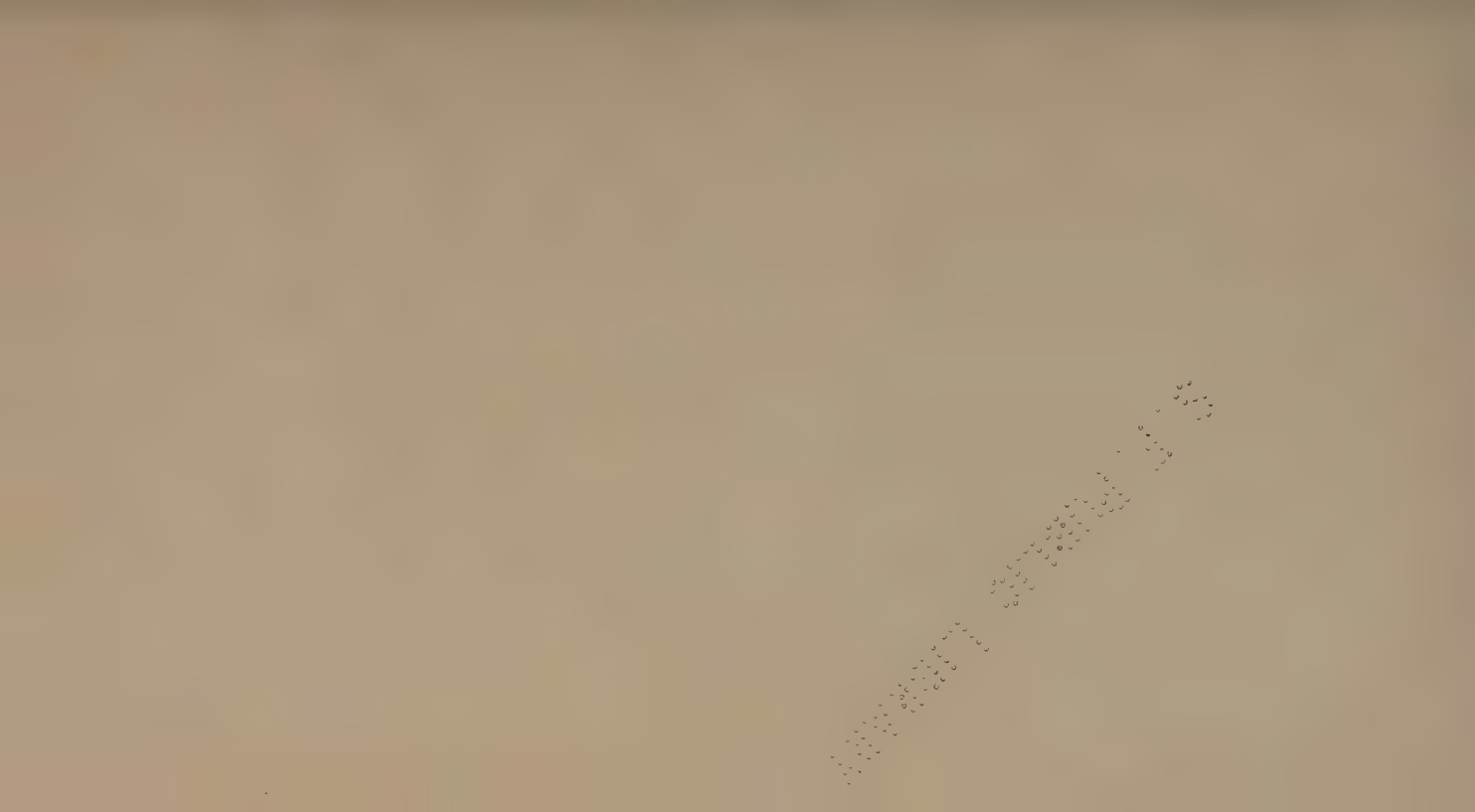
"That's the time," said he, "to slip into my experiences. I shall be primed and jolly—up to concert pitch, and I can spin my yarns as easily as the spider spins her web."

On this particular evening I again urged him to make a start at once. He, however, only laughed, and said, "There's plenty of time. Wait, anyhow, until the new piece comes out. I've got nearly all the dates prepared."

Then he began to talk. His tongue was like a windmill, and once set going, one never knew when or where it would stop. At present, he was full of his farewell benefit, and he began to explain that it had been postponed at the instigation of the Messrs. Gatti, who had guaranteed him an engagement of twelve months for "In the Ranks," and had now induced him to accept a part in the new piece, after the run of which, however, he was firmly resolved to retire.

He was in high spirits, and from the benefit he glanced off to Macready, Helen Faucit, Phelps, Sheridan Knowles, America, the Forrest Riots, Tom Hamblin, and to other more racy reminiscences. Altogether, it was a genial, jovial evening, one to be remembered.

At the end of the performance he drove me home.



MR. KENDAL AS LORD CLANCARTY.

When we parted, we arranged to meet on the following Tuesday to commence operations.

The very next night, at the very same hour, when he arrived at his house in Barrington Road, Brixton, he opened the door of the brougham to let himself out; but finding the lapel of his coat had caught in the door on the off-side, he called upon the driver to jump down and extricate him.

Unfortunately at the very moment Ryder was stepping out on the one side, the driver slammed the door on the other, the horse took fright and bolted, and the poor old fellow was thrown out, head foremost, on the curb-stone, before his own threshold. When they took him in, he was bathed in blood, and senseless!

From the very first, a serious, if not fatal, result was anticipated, and it was essential to confine him to his bed. To the astonishment, however, of everybody, after two or three weeks he was enabled to come downstairs for a few hours daily, and it was hoped he was beginning to rally.

On Saturday, February 29th, as I drove down to Norwood with some friends, we called to inquire after his health, and to leave him some flowers. As we approached his house, we were shocked to see that the window-blinds were down. I thought it was all over, but resolved to know the worst. Making inquiry of the housekeeper, I ascertained that his mother's funeral was at that very moment actually taking place at Margate.

He was up, and wished to see me. I found him

with his never-failing cigar in his mouth, and a bottle of champagne on the table. By a strange coincidence, he was reading the paper, which will be found in the second volume, about poor Gus Brooke.

"Of course, Martha's told you?" he said. "I am trying to forget it in reading about Gus; very nice, but not exactly mirth-inspiring. Poor Gus! It's no use—I can't forget it; I wish I could. Poor old Grannie! After all, I'm glad she's gone before me, for I don't know what would have become of her if I had been taken first. Bessy's gone down to Margate, and the funeral will be all right, that's one comfort. Poor Grannie! She was ninety-five—never had a day's illness till this bout came, and carried her off. It's d——d hard lines I can't be there to see her put to rest beside the old man; but look here," he continued, pointing to his feet and ankles, which were swollen to an abnormal size, "these ain't exactly the things for 'the lean and hungry Cassius' to go floating about with. I used to need 'improvers.' Ecod! these want removing, not improving!"

"Good G—! Dropsy?" I exclaimed.

"Right you are, my boy. Have a drop—not of this, but of that," pointing to the champagne.

Then we pledged each other in a bumper.

He wanted me to stay for the afternoon, but I had two ladies waiting, the horses were breathed and getting chilled, besides which, we had a drive of eight or ten miles before us. So I had reluctantly to say, "Good-bye. Keep a good heart, old man. I shall come and look you up again soon."

"You're sure to find me here," he said, with a grim smile. Then he continued :

> "'And now,
> For ever, and for ever—farewell, Brutus !
> If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed ;
> If not, 'tis true, this parting was well made.'"

And so we shook hands, and parted—never to meet again.

Ten days afterwards an operation was performed, which appeared to yield relief, hence he became hopeful and elate, and harked back to his farewell benefit, on which he had set his heart. Mr. Mowbray undertook the arrangement of the preliminaries. Mr. Augustus Harris, with his accustomed generosity, promised the gratuitous use of Drury Lane Theatre. Mr. Irving, with equal generosity, telegraphed from America that he, Miss Terry, and the Lyceum Company would make their first appearance after their return from the States on the occasion. Mr. Wilson Barrett, all the London managers, and the entire profession, volunteered their assistance.

The Prince of Wales and other distinguished gentlemen took an active and personal interest in the matter, and there can be no doubt it would have been a remarkable and historical event. Without even so much as the issue of an advertisement, cheques came flowing in from all parts of the country.

All was progressing favourably, and it was confidently anticipated that poor Ryder had taken a new

lease of life for at least another year, when, unfortunately, his malady took a yet more serious turn, and he became haunted with the presentiment that he should die on the 26th of March. That afternoon, when he got up, he became depressed and melancholy, and kept muttering to himself, "The twenty-sixth! Grannie died on the twenty-sixth—I shall die on the twenty-sixth!"

He went to bed early (he was then much better), and at eleven o'clock, when his daughter left him, he had surmounted these gloomy forebodings. As he bade her "Good-night," he said, "Mind you come early to-morrow, Bessy."

During his illness, his housekeeper, a faithful and attached friend, whom he had brought from his mother's home over thirty years ago, attended upon him day and night. For some time past he had been unable to move without her assistance, but on the morning of the twenty-seventh, at about two o'clock, with a sudden spasmodic accession of strength, he sprang out of bed. When she had assisted him back he said, "Give me a little brandy-and-water." Having swallowed it, he said, "Thanks; now get some for yourself. That's right, I feel better than I have done for a long time; we shall have a good night."

It was now about a quarter to three. As she lay down on the sofa opposite, she inquired:

"You're sure you are quite right and comfortable?"

"Quite sure," he replied. "Good-night; God bless you, old lass!"

For a time she lay listening, until his regular breathing assured her that he slept. Then, wearied and outworn by continually watching, at last she, too, dozed off into a fitful slumber.

An hour afterwards she was awakened by a piercing, unearthly cry—it was the death-rattle!

He was sitting bolt upright, but by the time she had reached his bedside it was all over. With that one sharp struggle he had passed away, and the poor faithful soul was alone with death.

* * * * * *

In Memoriam.

JOHN RYDER.

Born, Isle of Thanet, April 5th, 1814,

Died, London, March 27th, 1885.

"Alas, poor Jack!"

Instead of preparing Mr. Ryder's memoirs, it has fallen to my lot to write his epitaph.

Probably no two men were ever more antagonistic in tone and temperament than he and I;

> "Yet I persuade myself to speak the truth
> Shall nothing wrong him."

From the commencement of our acquaintance in my earliest youth, on the memorable night of the Forrest row in Edinburgh, to the end, we were on terms of friendly intimacy; and, although his theory of art was not mine (which is, indeed, somewhat iconoclastic!), I had so high an opinion of the value of his services that, when I opened the Queen's Theatre,

next to Mr. Phelps, he was the first man I engaged. Hence it may not be altogether out of place that the task has devolved on me of briefly indicating his relationship to dramatic art in our time.

With the departure of John Ryder the present generation loses one of the few remaining links which connects us with the race of giants, amongst whom, in his early manhood, he lived and moved. In that *epos* he filled the *rôle* of a strange heterogeneous personality—compounded partly of Ajax the Greater, and partly of Thersites. He had the martial swagger of the former, and the keen and venomous humour of the latter. His long and lean figure was surmounted by the head of an antique Roman, and the beak of an eagle. His eyes, too, were vulturine. Sometimes they were contracted and filmy, sometimes dilated and ablaze with infernal fire. He had a weird and uncanny habit of clutching and pointing the fingers of his right hand downward, for all the world as if they were the talons of a vulture. At such times I was disposed to think that if the doctrine of evolution be true, some progenitor of his in dim and distant ages must surely have been a bird of prey.

There was no music in his voice, no poetry in his soul, and his demeanour on the stage was stridulent and assertive. His appreciation of the text, though never destitute of intelligence, was bald and commonplace, and sometimes perilously akin to vulgarity; while his executive capacity was absolutely restricted

to the representation of the vigour of his art *without* its variety or refinement, its passion minus its poetry and pathos. His colouring was indeed invariably vivid and correct, but it was always laid on with a pound brush.

Despite these drawbacks he possessed one inestimable merit; in a frivolous age he was never afraid or ashamed of being in earnest; hence during a decade of degeneracy he became a veritable "Triton amongst the minnows," and towered head and shoulders above the mannikins by whom he was surrounded.

To the fact that he always "made himself heard," and taught others that the first aim both of the actor and the orator should be to "speak out," and to another equally potent fact, that generations of men and women had grown old with him, and had heard, through his mouth, great deeds and noble sentiments enunciated in stentorian tones, much of his popularity may doubtless have been attributed—a popularity which continued to increase as he grew older, and his peculiarities became more exaggerated and objectionable.

His best part, in the higher range of the drama, was undoubtedly Iago, a coarse and strongly accentuated but highly intelligent performance. Hubert in "King John," Macduff and Master Walter came next; but his very best parts—the parts entirely suited to his idiosyncrasies—were Salamenes, Gabor, Kent, Casca, Enobarbus, and Dentatus. Beyond and above all these, he excelled in that of a viperous,

cursing, mouthing, wicked old cavalier in poor Watts Phillips' play, "Amos Clark."

As a teacher of what is grandiloquently called elocution, he had a large following, and taught and drilled (as far as teaching and drilling can do) a few of his pupils into some knowledge of the rudimental principles of the actor's art. Probably the most notable examples of these were the late Miss Neilson, the present Miss Wallis, and Miss Calhoun.

His stage management was not distinguished by subtlety or refinement, but he was well grounded in the grammar of the stage, and was one of the most useful men that ever entered a theatre.

His voice and manner always smacked of the sailor, and I think much of his boisterousness and his affluence of adjectives must have come from his seafaring forbears! He had always the courage of his convictions, and he was prepared at any moment to "row" on any subject, or upon any pretext, with anybody or everybody—in fact, I rather think he rejoiced in a "row"—and he was accustomed to emphasize his opinions with a copious and florid vocabulary.

On one occasion when he was with me at the Queen's he had been "letting out" a little of his superfluous energy at some refractory "supers." I laughed and said, "Spoken like an honest drover—so they sell bullocks!"

"Right you are, my son," he replied, "but bullocks and blockheads are of the same kidney, and if you

ADELAIDE NEILSON.

want to get 'em over the ground you must let 'em have it hot!"

In politics he was a rabid Tory, and he was utterly intolerant of anyone who ventured to differ with him on Constitutional questions; indeed, he advocated the "removal" of every Radical in existence, with the aid of the nearest rope attached to the nearest lamp-post.

Although thoroughly Agnostic, he upheld the union of Church and State as a beneficial and beneficent arrangement for the good of the lower orders.

"His soul was not touched to finer issues," but he was essentially and abundantly virile. He hated a snob, he detested a sneak, he loathed a liar, and no earthly consideration could ever induce him to "call a rogue a gentleman, to please the rascal's ear for music."

END OF VOL. I.

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